



HISTORY·STORIES·OF·OTHERLANDS

THE  
BEGINNINGS

ROW·PETERSON·&·COMPANY

Georgia Bane  
Nancy Laprade<sup>n.</sup> 1

120

Property of  
Durham City Schools

White & Lockhart gothic  
L. to historical

29  
C + NR  
70

Property of  
Durham City Schools

310 3511

Property of  
Durham C Schools









PHENICIANS BARTERING WITH THE ANCIENT BRITONS IN  
CORNWALL

From the painting by Lord Leighton, P.R.A., in the Royal Exchange, London

HISTORY STORIES OF OTHER LANDS

# THE BEGINNINGS

EDITED BY  
ARTHUR GUY TERRY  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY,  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY



CHICAGO

NEW YORK

ROW, PETERSON & COMPANY

## HISTORY STORIES OF OTHER LANDS

**BOOK I—TALES FROM FAR AND NEAR.** With 16 colored illustrations.

**BOOK II—TALES OF LONG AGO.** With 16 colored illustrations.

**BOOK III—THE BEGINNINGS.** 55 B. C.-1066 A. D. With 12 colored illustrations reproduced from famous pictures, pictorial time charts, etc.

**BOOK IV—LORD AND VASSAL.** 1066-1485. With 12 colored illustrations reproduced from famous pictures, pictorial time charts, etc.

**BOOK V—THE NEW LIBERTY.** 1485-1688. With 12 colored illustrations reproduced from famous pictures, pictorial time charts, etc.

**BOOK VI—THE MODERN WORLD.** 1688 to the present. With 12 colored illustrations reproduced from famous pictures, pictorial time charts, etc.

CHICAGO

NEW YORK

ROW, PETERSON AND COMPANY



## PREFACE

The aim of this series is to provide some facts of British history not usually given in elementary schoolbooks, together with some broad outlines of the European history of which British history and our own to an extent form a part. When this larger background is sketched in, the great events of American history are seen in their true relation and assume a new significance. The historic sense is enriched when such movements as the Crusades or the Renaissance are exhibited in their wider aspects — as reaching our shores, even though remotely, like the tides from afar.

The first two books of the series consist of simple stories of all time drawn from ancient history. The later volumes deal each with a definite period. British history receives a large share of space, because of its close relationship to our own, but the narrative pauses from time to time to tell of what was happening elsewhere, especially where the course of events across the Channel influenced or was influenced by what was happening in Britain.

In the first two books, intended for very little folks, and in Books III and IV to a much less extent, episodes that are probably of legendary origin have

been included. In the last two books the aim has been to make the account strictly historical.

In addition to a great number of drawings of historical objects, etc., and pictures of persons and places of note, the colored illustrations provide reproductions of famous historical paintings in the galleries of Great Britain and the Continent, heretofore not available for school use in this country.

Maps and pictorial time charts, designed to help the pupils to fix the time- and place-relations, by appealing to the visual memory, have been placed for convenience of reference in the appendix by themselves.

# CONTENTS

|                                   |         |     |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-----|
| THE BRITISH ISLES IN EARLY TIMES  | - - - - | 1   |
| ROME, THE MISTRESS OF THE WORLD   | - - - - | 4   |
| CÆSAR VISITS BRITAIN              | - - - - | 8   |
| A BRAVE BRITISH CHIEF             | - - - - | 12  |
| THE GREATEST OF THE ROMANS        | - - - - | 15  |
| THE DEATH OF CÆSAR                | - - - - | 21  |
| AUGUSTUS, THE FIRST ROMAN EMPEROR | - - - - | 26  |
| THE GOLDEN AGE                    | - - - - | 31  |
| CARACTACUS                        | - - - - | 36  |
| A WARRIOR QUEEN                   | - - - - | 39  |
| AGRICOLA AND THE CALEDONIANS      | - - - - | 44  |
| THE GREAT ROMAN WALLS IN BRITAIN  | - - - - | 49  |
| WHAT THE ROMANS DID FOR BRITAIN   | - - - - | 52  |
| THE FIRST BRITISH MARTYR          | - - - - | 56  |
| CONSTANTINE AND THE NEW ROME      | - - - - | 59  |
| THE GOTHs AT THE GATES            | - - - - | 65  |
| ALARIC, KING OF THE GOTHs         | - - - - | 70  |
| THE LAST FIGHT IN THE COLISEUM    | - - - - | 75  |
| ATTILA, " THE SCOURGE OF GOD "    | - - - - | 80  |
| THE STORY OF GENEVIÈVE            | - - - - | 86  |
| THE TERRIBLE VANDALS              | - - - - | 90  |
| " THE GROANS OF THE BRITAINS "    | - - - - | 94  |
| HENGIST AND HORSA                 | - - - - | 96  |
| " THE WOLVES OF THE SEA "         | - - - - | 100 |

|                                |           |     |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----|
| HOW THE SAXONS LIVED           | - - - - - | 105 |
| THE PASSING OF ARTHUR          | - - - - - | 108 |
| "ANGELS, NOT ANGLES"           | - - - - - | 112 |
| A GREAT PREACHER               | - - - - - | 116 |
| THE STORY OF MOHAMMED          | - - - - - | 120 |
| THE MOORS IN SPAIN             | - - - - - | 126 |
| THE FRANKS                     | - - - - - | 130 |
| EUROPE IN DARKNESS             | - - - - - | 135 |
| CONVERSION OF THE GERMANS      | - - - - - | 138 |
| CAEDMON, THE SWEET SINGER      | - - - - - | 143 |
| THE VENERABLE BEDE             | - - - - - | 147 |
| THE STORY OF CHARLEMAGNE       | - - - - - | 150 |
| THE HARDY NORTHMEN             | - - - - - | 157 |
| THE STORY OF ALFRED THE GREAT— |           |     |
| Early Years                    | - - - - - | 161 |
| Alfred and the Danes           | - - - - - | 163 |
| Alfred and the Cakes           | - - - - - | 167 |
| Alfred and Guthrum             | - - - - - | 170 |
| Alfred as King                 | - - - - - | 174 |
| THE FIRST DANISH KING          | - - - - - | 178 |
| APPENDIX I.—Maps               | - - - - - | 184 |



## COLORED PLATES

Facing page

1. PHENICIANS BARTERING WITH THE ANCIENT  
BRITONS IN CORNWALL

Painted by Lord Leighton, P.R.A. *Frontispiece*  
*Reproduced by permission of the Gresham Committee*  
The painting is described on page 9.

24
2. THE IDES OF MARCH

Painted by Sir E. J. Poynter, P.R.A. *24*  
*Reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Man-*  
*chester*

Cæsar's wife pleads with him not to venture forth on the fatal 15th, the Ides of March, pointing to the comet in the sky: "The heavens themselves blaze forth the deaths of princes". On the left stands a bust of Cæsar, and beside it a Roman standard propped against the wall.

40
3. A ROMAN TRIUMPH

Painted by F. W. W. Topham, R.I. *40*  
*Reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Leicester*

Crowned with laurel and holding a laurel branch in his hand, a victorious general is being borne on a chariot through the streets of Rome. Before the victor march the captives whom he has taken; behind the soldiers whom he has led to victory.

49
4. AN ATTACK ON THE ROMAN WALL

Painted by Robert Spence *49*  
*Reproduced by permission of the Artist*

The barbarians have fired the gatehouse and burst open the gates, while others are swarming over the wall. In the moonlit distance Roman soldiers are hurrying along the wall to help their comrades.

64
5. THE BATTLE OF CONSTANTINE

Painted by Giulio Romano *64*

The original is in the Vatican at Rome painted on the ceiling of one of the halls from sketches made by Raphael (1480-1520). Notice behind Constantine's horse the Roman standards surmounted by the cross.

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |             |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 6.  | THE CHARIOT RACE                                                                                                                                                                                       | Facing page |
|     | Painted by Professor A. Wagner                                                                                                                                                                         | 73          |
|     | <i>Reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Manchester</i>                                                                                                                                       |             |
|     | The chariots (the blue, the red, &c.) are passing the throne where the emperor sits beneath a red canopy. The pillared structure on the right is the barrier dividing the race course down the middle. |             |
| 7.  | ATTILA ON THE MARCH TO PARIS                                                                                                                                                                           |             |
|     | Painted by E. Delaunay                                                                                                                                                                                 | 80          |
|     | <i>Reproduced from the Mural Panel in the Panthéon, Paris</i>                                                                                                                                          |             |
|     | Riding bare-back, the king of the Huns leads on his savage men. On the left his swordbearer holds aloft the head of a warrior, killed perhaps in the village that is blazing in their rear.            |             |
| 8.  | ST. GENEVIÈVE ENCOURAGES THE MEN OF PARIS                                                                                                                                                              |             |
|     | Painted by E. Delaunay                                                                                                                                                                                 | 89          |
|     | <i>Reproduced from the Mural Panel in the Panthéon, Paris</i>                                                                                                                                          |             |
|     | Standing with her white-robed sisters before the church door, Geneviève speaks to the people of Paris. Some threaten her with stones, other kneel and kiss her robes.                                  |             |
| 9.  | AN ANGLO-SAXON FEAST                                                                                                                                                                                   |             |
|     | Painted by Frank Gillett, R.I.                                                                                                                                                                         | 105         |
|     | For details see page 95.                                                                                                                                                                               |             |
| 10. | THE PASSING OF ARTHUR                                                                                                                                                                                  |             |
|     | Painted by John H. Bacon, A.R.A.                                                                                                                                                                       | 112         |
|     | For details see page 100.                                                                                                                                                                              |             |
| 11. | THE CORONATION OF CHARLEMAGNE BY POPE LEO III                                                                                                                                                          |             |
|     | Painted by Henry Lévy                                                                                                                                                                                  | 153         |
|     | <i>Reproduced from the Mural Panel in the Panthéon, Paris</i>                                                                                                                                          |             |
|     | In this picture, the Pope is about to crown Charlemagne, when St. Peter (with the key) appears overhead as in a vision, bestowing his blessing on the new emperor.                                     |             |
| 12. | HOW THE DANES CAME UP THE CHANNEL A THOUSAND YEARS AGO                                                                                                                                                 |             |
|     | Painted by Herbert A. Bone                                                                                                                                                                             | 168         |
|     | <i>Reproduced by permission of the Artist</i>                                                                                                                                                          |             |
|     | A grim welcome awaits the Danes, for the coast is guarded not only by dangerous reefs but by Alfred's Saxon warriors.                                                                                  |             |

# THE BEGINNINGS

---

## The British Isles in Early Times

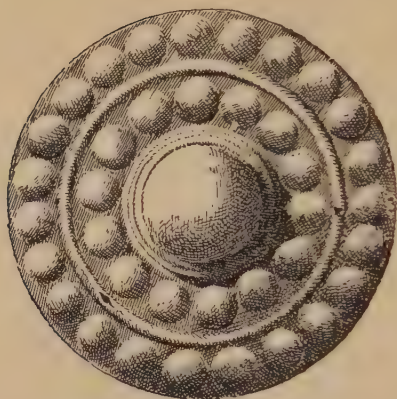
In one of the many beautiful pictures that may be seen on the walls of the Royal Exchange, London, the artist shows how the people of Britain carried on their trade in very early times. In this picture<sup>1</sup> are seen a number of traders who have come in their ships from the far-off lands of Tyre and Carthage, on the shores of the Great Sea.

These merchants are offering beautiful purple cloth, bronze weapons, ivory, vases, and other goods in exchange for the wares of Britain. The Britons on the other hand are offering bars of tin dug out of the mines, and skins of wild beasts caught in the forests that covered large parts of the country.

Later on we find that a Greek traveler visited these shores. He had set out from the

---

<sup>1</sup>See colored frontispiece.



Ancient British Bronze Shield

south of France, or Gaul as it was then called. The people of his town had sent him to find out where the merchants of Tyre were getting the tin, which was used for the making of bronze, at that time

the most useful of metals.

He sailed around the coast of Spain, through the narrow strait that joins the Great Sea to the Atlantic. Then, after skirting the stormy Bay of Biscay, he sailed up the Channel to Kent. Here he found a market where the tin of Cornwall was bought and sold. He had found out the secret which the men of Tyre had so long kept.

This Greek traveler afterwards sailed up the east coast of Britain as far as the Shetland Islands, and on his return home wrote an account of what he had seen. The book has been lost, but we find in the works of later writers of those times some things which have been taken from it.

He tells us that the people grew grain, which they threshed in large barns, because the weather was too bad for them to do so in the open air, as was done in Sunny France and Spain. The people, he says, lived on fruits and the roots of plants, and made a drink of wheat and the honey of wild bees. He also tells us that there were a great many people in the lands around the coast, but very few far inland, for the country was covered with thick forests and marshes.



Granite Wedge or Axe.



Bone Comb.



Flint Arrow Heads.



Harpoon Head of Flint.



Circular-edged Flint Knife.

## Tools and Weapons of the Stone Age

What we know of the British Isles in still earlier times is got largely from the remains which the people have left behind, and which have been found in many parts of the country. In those days, wolves, bears, tigers, and other huge beasts must have roamed across its plains, for we find their bones, and in one case the



mark of a tiger's tooth on some of the bones he gnawed.

The people used weapons made of flint, and we still pick up flint arrowheads in those parts of the country where chalk with flints can be found. Their rough tools were more or less pear-shaped, so as to be easily grasped by the rounded or rough end, and some of them had handles of wood or deer's horns.

These and many other things that have been found enable us to piece together the story of those far-off days, and tell us something of the people who lived in Britain in very early times.

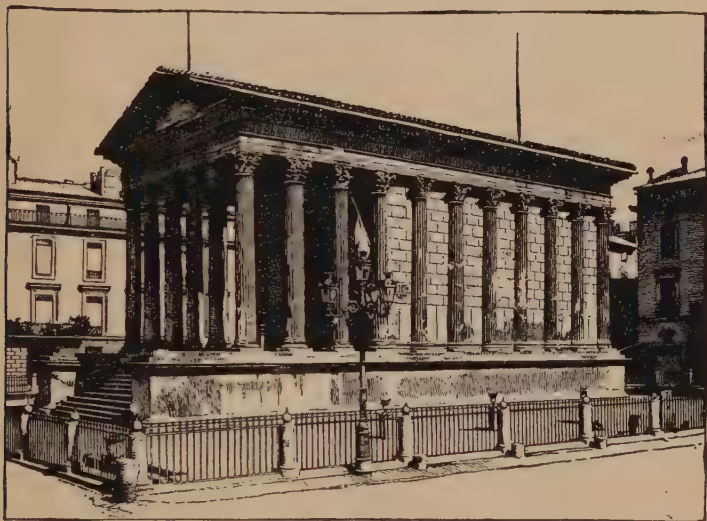
---

### **Rome, the Mistress of the World**

In these far-off times the nations that lived in Asia and around the shores of the Great Sea were very different from the tribes of Britain. In the warmer air of the south, cities early grew up among the islands and on the winding coasts. From port to port ships sailed, and so the sea served as a high-road to link them together.

When the people of Britain were still wild and savage, learned men in the East were

teaching wisdom in their famous schools. The people of Tyre and their colony, Carthage, in the north of Africa, were great traders and sailors. They traded not only with the coun-



Roman Temple of the First Century at Nîmes in the South of France.  
The finest existing Roman building

tries bordering the great inland sea, but even visited, as we have seen, distant lands.

The Greeks were then a very wise and clever people, and in their cities were to be found fine buildings and beautiful statues and pictures. The Romans were the bravest soldiers in the world, and were feared everywhere.

First one country and then another grew great and strong, till in the times just before the birth of Christ the Romans had become so powerful that they were able to conquer all the other nations. They were masters of every country to which their armies had been sent.

Their great city of Rome, in Italy, was the chief place in the world as it was then known; but this was a small part of the world as we now know it, being for the most part the countries round about the Great Sea.

This water the Romans called "our own sea", and they gave it the name of the Mediterranean, which means the "Mid-land Sea". The countries bordering the Mediterranean were held together, like the rim of a wheel, around their center, Rome.

Rome had had to fight very hard before she came to be known as "The Mistress of the World". Often she was very hard pressed, but she always won in the end. Her people were very brave, and were willing to give up everything in order to serve their country.

" For Romans in Rome's quarrel  
Spared neither land nor gold,  
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,  
In the brave days of old,"

when she was fighting her enemies in Italy or in other countries.

At this time the great general of the Romans was Julius Cæsar. In his youth he had fought in Asia and Spain, where he had shown great skill and bravery.

We are told that when he was in Spain, he was one day reading an account of the doings of the greatest general that had lived before that time. This was Alexander the Great, who while still a very young man, had conquered all the then-known world.

Cæsar, when he had finished reading, sat for a long time with a very sad look on his face. At last he burst into tears. When one of those who were standing by asked why he wept, he replied: “Do you not think that I have good cause to be sad, when King Alexander, being no older than I am now, had conquered so many countries and nations, whilst I have done nothing worthy of myself?”

He was very eager to become the chief man in Rome, but he knew that before he could be this, he must become a great general. So he got them to make him governor of the province of Gaul, now called France, which at that time

was causing a great deal of trouble to the Romans.

He at once led his army across the Alps as far as the River Rhone. Wherever he went, the restless tribes of Gaul were defeated, and in a few years the whole country was made part of the Roman Empire.

---

### **Cæsar visits Britain**

Whilst Cæsar was fighting with those Gauls who lived in what is now called Brittany, he found out that they were sometimes helped by friendly warriors from Britain. The Britons were part of a great people or family of mankind called the Celtic race. The Gauls were part of the same family.

So, when Cæsar had overcome Gaul, he made up his mind to cross the sea and conquer the men of Britain also. He wanted to prevent their helping the Gauls any more. He also wished to see what the island was like, for he had heard strange tales of its wealth and beauty.

With an army of about 10,000 men, the great



general set sail from the port of Boulogne on the evening of August 25, 55 B. C.

Early next morning, as the ships drew near the white cliffs of Kent, the soldiers on board saw, stretching along the shore, a great throng of wild, half-naked men ready to defend their island

home. A number of the Britons, without waiting for the first ship to reach the land, rushed into the waters to drive the invaders back.

It was not easy for the Romans to land. Their ships were large, and the water was not deep, so that they could not draw quite close to the beach. The Roman soldiers, too, were not used to the sea, and were not eager to fight the waves before they could reach the land and fight the men.



Roman Soldier

But at length a brave standard-bearer, belonging to the tenth legion, raised his standard, a brass eagle with outspread wings, fixed on the top of a long staff. Pointing to the figure of the eagle, he cried: "Soldiers, follow me, unless you wish to give up your eagle to the enemy! I at any rate will do my duty to my general and my country."

So saying, he leaped boldly into the sea with the standard in his hand. Then the other soldiers forgot to be afraid. One after another

they sprang into the sea after him, and dashed through the water towards the land.



Roman Galley

The men on shore rushed out to meet them, hurling stones and darts. Many a hard blow was struck, many a man was wounded and slain. But the Romans were the better-trained soldiers, and after a

hard struggle they won their way to land, and soon drove the Britons in flight before them.

When the Britons found that they were helpless against his troops, they begged Cæsar to grant them peace. This he was willing to do.

But a great storm arose, and the Roman ships, which had been left on the beach, were lifted by the waves and dashed upon the rocks. Many of them were broken to pieces, and some other ships, which were bringing Cæsar's horse-soldiers from Gaul, were forced by the storm to return.

The Britons saw what damage the storm had done, and they were glad of it. Cæsar's army was not now very large, and he had lost some of his ships. If only his soldiers could be kept on the island, and be prevented from getting food during the winter months, the Britons thought they might destroy their enemy after all.

But Cæsar was too good a general to let his army be destroyed in this way. He ordered his ships that were most damaged to be broken up, and with their wood the holes in the other ships were mended.

Grain for food was got in from the harvest



Roman  
Standard

fields of the Britons, and the Romans made around their camp a rampart and a ditch, behind which they were safe from attack.

But when the storms had ceased, Cæsar thought it best to return to Gaul, for he could not hope to crush the Britons with his little army. After one more terrible battle, in which the Britons were beaten, Cæsar burned many of their dwellings and then left the island.

---

### A Brave British Chief

In the summer of the following year Cæsar returned to Britain with a larger army, which landed on the coast of Kent without having to fight; for the Britons, remembering their first defeat, had fled into the dark forests which covered that part of the country. There they built a stronghold, from which they made from time to time sudden rushes on the enemy.

Cæsar then marched inland till he reached the Thames River. He had many fights during the march, for the Britons, unable to meet the Romans in regular battle, divided themselves into small parties, and hung upon the sides and rear of the Roman army.

The British chief made a great effort to prevent Cæsar from crossing the Thames. He caused sharp-pointed stakes to be fixed under the water. But the skill and bravery of the Romans overcame everything.

After crossing the river, the Romans fought their way through woods and fields to a large forest. There the Britons had built a strong camp, with a ditch and stakes all around it.

It should have been easy for the Romans to break into such a place, for they had axes, spades, picks, and all kinds of tools for cutting and breaking down the fences and filling the ditches.

Yet the Britons fought so bravely that this was not done till great numbers were killed. Then their chief gave the signal for a general flight, and he and his army sought safe shelter in the forests farther inland.

But the tribes of Britain did not unite very



long under one great leader, so the British chief was soon deserted by all the others and gave up the struggle, promising to pay each year a large sum of money to the victors.



Roman Soldiers Fighting under a Testudo (from a bas-relief)

The Testudo was formed by the soldiers standing close together and holding the shields over their heads

Cæsar, who did not wish to spend the winter in so rude a country, was quite willing to agree to this. So he departed from Kent, and embarked in September in a great hurry and in fear of the autumn gales. He took with him

a number of prisoners to be sold as slaves, while some of the chiefs he sent to Rome.

Cæsar had shown the Britons how helpless they were against the power of Rome. There was now no longer any fear that they would help the Gauls, and the great Roman general left Britain, never to return again.

For nearly a hundred years after Cæsar went away from Britain, the Romans left the island alone. During these years the British chiefs fought with one another, and the strongest for the time being took the lead. And while they fought with one another, the faithful sea kept guard over their shores.

---

### The Greatest of the Romans

On Cæsar's return from Britain he had great trouble with the Gauls in the south. At their head was a brave young chief, who had won over to his side not only the Gauls of his own tribe, but those of western Gaul.

Cæsar, however, by very rapid marches, was able to keep the rest of the Gauls from joining this young Gallic leader. The Gaul had not a large enough army to carry on war with



Gallic Warriors

Cæsar's trained soldiers in the open field, so he made up his mind to starve out the enemy. The whole country was laid waste, and towns and stores were burned, so that the Romans were greatly in want of food.

Cæsar marched with his whole army against the young chief, and forced him to shut himself up in the strong town of Alesia, which

stood on a lofty hill in the east of Gaul.

Cæsar marched thither and laid siege to the town. Around the place he made two lines of trenches the one to defend the army against the attacks of the large army in Alesia, and the other to prevent help reaching the town from the outside.

Forced by hunger, the Gauls tried to break through the Roman lines, but in two great battles they were beaten. The young leader of the Gauls, seeing it was useless to go on



JULIUS CÆSAR

From the statue in the National Museum at Naples

with the war, made up his mind to give himself up as a prisoner to Cæsar in order to save the rest of his countrymen. Fully armed, and riding on his horse, he entered Cæsar's camp and gave himself up to the victor.

Cæsar, though as a rule he was merciful to his enemies, would not forgive him. He led the gallant chief as a prisoner to Rome, where he was afterwards put to death. Gaul, which included not only France but Belgium and Switzerland, was now made part of the Roman Empire.

Eight years had passed since Cæsar left Rome, and during that time he had made a great name for himself. All these years he had been training an army, who were ready to follow him everywhere, since he always led them to victory. But the time had now come for Cæsar to return to Rome.

There was one man in Rome, however, who was jealous of the power of Cæsar. This was Pompey, a very great general, who was at the head of affairs in Rome. The news of Cæsar's victories made him fear that Cæsar would become the first man of the State if he returned with his army.

Cæsar saw that if he gave up his army he



would lose all his power, and would perhaps never get it again. So he marched his soldiers to the banks of the little river Rubicon, which divided the province of Gaul from Italy.

For a whole night he halted by the side of this river, in doubt as to whether he should cross it or not. He knew that if he took his

army with him he would be declaring war against his own country. On the other hand, if he did not take his army, he would have to give up all hope of ever becoming ruler of Rome.

When morning dawned, he spurred his horse into the water, crying aloud, "The die is cast", and ordered his army to march on Rome. Since that time it has become a proverb to say, "He has passed the Rubicon", meaning that someone has begun a thing from which he cannot draw back.

When the news reached Rome that Cæsar had crossed the Rubicon with his army, Pompey and his friends fled to Greece, where the



Pompey (from the bust  
in the National Mu-  
seum, Naples)

Roman fleet was. Pompey's army was in Spain, so Cæsar, after staying a short time in Rome, hurried thither to fight against Pompey's officers.

As he left Rome Cæsar said to one of his friends: "I go to fight against an army without a general; I shall come back to fight against a general without an army".

In nine months Cæsar had made himself master of Spain, and then he sailed for Greece, where he defeated Pompey in the great battle of Pharsalia. Pompey managed to escape, and fled to Egypt, where he was killed.

Cæsar followed his enemy to Egypt, and on his landing there someone brought him Pompey's head. It is said



Gallic Warriors

that when Cæsar saw the head of his former friend, he turned from it in horror and burst into tears.

After three months' stay in Egypt, Cæsar sailed to Asia Minor, where some of Pompey's friends still held out against him. Cæsar easily beat them, and sent the news of his victory in a short and famous letter: "I came, I saw, I conquered". From there he went to Greece, and after defeating the last of Pompey's army he returned to Rome, master of the Roman world.

---

### The Death of Cæsar.

Julius Cæsar had now become the foremost man in all the world. Temples and statues were raised in his honor, and he was called "The Father of his Country". He at once set himself to make new and wise laws, and did everything he could to make things better in Rome than they had been for many a day.

One very useful piece of work Cæsar did, was to set the calendar right. In order to correct the errors which had been going on for many years, he made the year of 46 B.C. consist of 445 days. All the years after that were to

have 365 days, except every fourth year, which was to have 366 days. He also made the fifth month the seventh and called it July, because he himself was born in that month.

Cæsar was greatly loved by the people, and he ruled as if he were King of Rome. There were some people who thought that he wanted to wear the crown, but the Romans hated the name of king; for in the early days Rome had been ruled by kings, but so badly did some of them treat the people, that at last they rose against their kings and drove them out of the city.

One time, when a great feast was being held, one of Cæsar's friends put a crown on his head, saying: "The people give you this by my hand". A few people who stood around raised a cheer.

Cæsar at once took off the crown, saying: "I am no king, but Cæsar". Loud shouts of applause rose from the crowd.

Thrice did this friend offer him the crown, and thrice he refused it. A number of the chief men in Rome, however, thought that Cæsar did this just to try the people, and they believed that the time would soon come when he would take the name of king.

There were others who were jealous of the good work Cæsar was doing. These two parties joined together in a plot to get rid of Cæsar. At their head were Cassius, whom Cæsar had offended in some way, and Brutus, whose



Brutus (from the bust at Rome)

life had been saved by Cæsar in battle, but who honestly thought it wrong for anyone to be king in Rome. Brutus belonged to an ancient noble family; it was one of his forefathers who had called the people to drive the kings out of Rome.

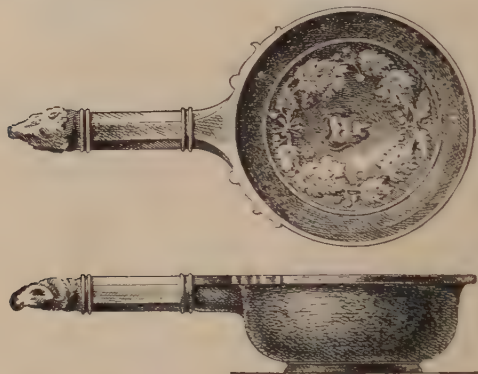
Cæsar is said to have been warned of his danger, but he paid no heed to the warning. A wizard bade him beware of a certain day in March, the Ides of March, as the Romans called it, for on that day he should be in great danger.

On March 15, 44 B.C. a very important meeting was to be held in the Senate House. This was the day the plotters had fixed for the murder of Cæsar. His wife tried to keep him from going to the meeting, as she had dreamt that



he was slain, and that she held his dead body in her arms.

Cæsar at first agreed to stay at home that day. But one of his friends, on calling at



Roman Patera (vessels used in temple services)

Cæsar's house, laughed at his fears. The Senate, he said, were willing to grant him all things, and to allow him to wear a crown in all other places by land and sea except in Italy.

Cæsar now made up his mind to go to the meeting after all. On his way he met the wizard who had warned him of his danger.

"The Ides of March are come," said Cæsar, laughing.

"So they are," gravely answered the wizard, "but they are not yet past."



THE IDES OF MARCH

From the painting by Sir E. J. Poynter, P.R.A., in the Manchester Art Gallery



When Cæsar reached the Senate House, all the Senate rose to do him honor as he seated himself in the golden chair. Then the plotters gathered round him, as if they had some favor to ask. Suddenly one of them from behind struck Cæsar in the neck with his sword. Cæsar, though unarmed, turned to defend himself.

The others struck at him, too. Then seeing the well-beloved Brutus with raised sword, Cæsar drew his mantle over his face and said:

“ And thou, too, Brutus! ”

With these last words he fell dead at the foot of Pompey's statue. It is said that he had three-and-twenty wounds upon his body, for it was agreed among the plotters that everyone should have a share in his murder.

Thus died Cæsar, the greatest of the Romans. The work he did for Rome was of the highest value, for not only was he one of



Centurion (a Roman officer who commanded a company of a hundred infantry)

the best generals the world has ever seen, but he was one of its greatest statesmen. Though he never became emperor himself, he opened the way for the emperors who came afterwards.

He was also a great writer. One of his books tells us a great deal about the people who lived in Britain when it was visited by him.

---

✓

### Augustus, the First Roman Emperor



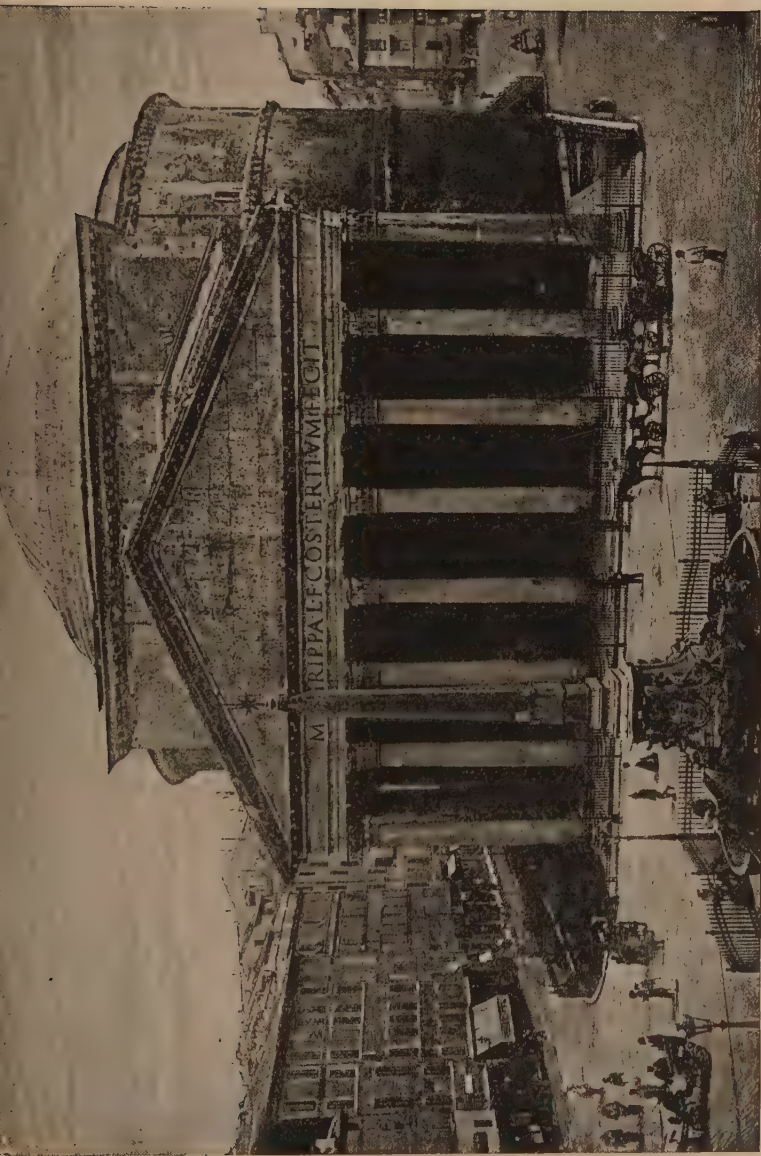
Mark Antony (from the bust in the Vatican, Rome)

After the death of Julius Cæsar there was great disorder in Rome. His murderers soon saw that the people were not with them. At Cæsar's funeral, indeed, the rage of the Romans against Brutus and Cassius rose so high, that in order to save their lives they and their

friends made haste to flee from Rome.

Cæsar's power now fell into the hands of his





### THE PANTHEON, ROME

Built during the reign of Augustus. It is the only building of ancient Rome that fulfils the purpose for which it was designed, as it is the burial place of the royal house of Italy

friend, Mark Antony, who had by his speeches stirred up the Roman mob against those who had slain Cæsar. It seemed as if Antony would have things all his own way, and that he would become the ruler of Rome. Cæsar, however, had named as his heir his nephew's son, afterwards known as Augustus Cæsar.

Augustus was only a lad of eighteen, studying in Greece, when he heard the news of Cæsar's death. He at once set out for Italy, and was received as their leader by Cæsar's troops. Antony and Augustus agreed to share the government between them.

They had soon to deal with Cæsar's murderers, who, having fled to Greece, had raised a large army there. Brutus and Cassius were defeated at Philippi, and both killed themselves after the battle rather than fall into the hands of the victors.

A new division of the Roman dominions was now made. Antony got the eastern part and Augustus the west, but soon they also came to blows, since both wished to have the sole power. Antony went to the east, where he became the fond slave of Cleopatra, the beautiful Queen of Egypt.

Instead of making ready for his great

struggle with Augustus, Antony remained with Cleopatra in Egypt, where he wasted his time in pleasure and feasting.



Coin of the Emperor Augustus  
(from the original in the  
British Museum)

Meanwhile Augustus was growing stronger and stronger in the west; and when he learned how Antony was spending his time and wasting Rome's money and men in the service of the Queen of Egypt, he made up his mind to set Antony aside and thus become the master of Rome.

In a great sea fight off the west coast of Greece, Augustus defeated the ships of Antony and Cleopatra. The victory was gained largely through the conduct of Cleopatra. While the fight was going on, Cleopatra ordered her ship to be rowed away. Sixty Egyptian ships followed her example, and Antony was shameless enough to go after her, leaving his soldiers to their fate.

They fled to Egypt, and, to escape falling into the hands of the young Cæsar, Antony stabbed himself. On hearing this, the Queen of Egypt gave orders that he should be brought

to the place where she was staying, that he might die beside her.

Cleopatra remained in her strong tower till Augustus reached Egypt. She thought she might persuade him to let her remain Queen of Egypt, but Augustus made it quite clear to her that he meant to take her as a prisoner to Rome. She thereupon put an end to her life by letting herself be bitten by an asp which, it was said, had been brought to her in a basket of figs.

Augustus now became master not only of Rome but of the world. The people were tired of civil war, and for twelve years Augustus was emperor, without having the title. It was now that the Romans bestowed on him the surname of Augustus, the "venerable" or "noble", and worshipped him as a god. No one thought of resisting him, for he had given peace to the world, and that was what everyone wished.



Coin of Antony and Cleopatra (from the original  
in the British Museum)

## The Golden Age

The reign of Augustus was called the "Golden Age", for not only did he bring peace to the war-tired world, but there lived at this time many of the greatest Roman writers — Horace, Virgil, Ovid, and Livy.

Augustus did much to improve the laws and manners of the city, and in his day Rome became the most beautiful city in the world. It was truly said of him: "Augustus found the city built of brick, and left it built of marble".

In his reign, "the cities grew and prospered, the fruitful lands of the provinces yielded rich harvests of grain, and wine, and oil, so that the country was adorned like a garden. All the great cities were connected with each other, and with Rome itself, by paved roads, which were so solidly made that they still exist in many parts of Europe."

Rome was indeed the Mistress of the World.



The Young Augustus  
(from the bust in the  
Vatican, Rome)





Romans fighting German Barbarians  
(from a bas-relief in the National Museum. Rome)

Of this time a Roman writer says: "Every man can go where he will; the harbors are full of ships, the mountains are safe for travelers just as the towns for their inhabitants. Fear has everywhere ceased. The land has put off its old armor of iron and clothed itself in robes of joy. The word of Homer has come to pass: 'The earth is common to all'."

The people, in order to please Augustus, called the eighth month of the year August. But as July had thirty-one days and August only thirty, the Romans thought that Augustus would be displeased at Cæsar's extra day, so they took a day from September and added it

to the end of August. That is the reason we have two months together, July and August, having thirty-one days each.

The eighth month was chosen because in that month happened the greatest events in the reign of Augustus. It was in August that he won the highest office in Rome; in that month he finished his great wars and overcame Egypt.

In his great wisdom Augustus saw that it was best not to add any new country to his empire, but to protect what he already had. During the most of his reign, therefore, there were no wars, except on the borders of the empire.

Only once were the armies of Augustus beaten. This took place in Germany, when his general, Varus, was attacked by the Germans under Herman. For three days the Roman legions fought their way through swamp and forest, but in the end Varus slew himself, and scarcely a Roman was left alive.

This loss so troubled Augustus, who was now grown old and weak, that for some time he allowed his beard and hair to grow as a sign of mourning, and often in the night he would wake, moaning: "O Varus, give me back my



Soldiers of the Prætorian Guard, the personal bodyguard of Augustus (from a bas-relief in the Louvre, Paris)

legions! Give me back my legions!" It is said that he was never the same again after this defeat.

Augustus died in the year 14 A.D. at the age of seventy-seven. Shortly before his death he called for a mirror, arranged his grey

hair neatly, and said to those who stood near: "Did I play my part well? If so, applaud me and farewell."

On the death of Augustus his will was read aloud in the Senate. In it he gave the Romans the advice to be content with the empire they had, and not to seek to make it bigger. At that time the boundaries of the Roman Empire were clear and simple. On the west it reached to the Atlantic Ocean, on the north to the Rhine and Danube, on the east to the River

Euphrates, and on the south to the sandy deserts of Arabia and Africa. (See map in appendix.)

A temple was built in honor of Augustus, and the Senate gave order that he was to be worshipped as a god.

An event happened during this reign that passed almost unnoticed. In a little village of the Roman province of Judea in Palestine the child Jesus Christ was born.



Augustus (from the statue in the Vatican, Rome)

**Caractacus** ✓

The advice given by Augustus in his will was followed by the Romans for many years after his death, for we find that the only country added to the Roman Empire was the island of Britain. Its nearness to the coast of Gaul seemed to invite the Romans, while the news that rich pearls were to be found on its shores also drew them thither.

In the year 43 A.D., therefore, nearly thirty years after the death of Augustus, Claudius, one of the Roman emperors, sent an army to conquer Britain. From the time that Cæsar left its shores, the Romans had not gained any firm foothold on the island, for as soon as their armies went away the people were ready to fight again.

Claudius, however, now made up his mind that Britain should really belong to Rome. He sent an army to this country to put down the chiefs, and appointed a Roman governor to rule over the Britons.

By this time the Britons had learned how to build strong camps, and knew how to defend themselves and how to attack the enemy. Thus there was a great deal of fighting to be done



before they could be forced to obey a Roman governor.

After his army had gained a number of battles, the Emperor Claudius himself came to Britain. His generals and soldiers marched up and down the country, in order to destroy the camps and forts that had been built by the chiefs, and to force the Britons to yield.

One of the last of the armies of the Britons which fought with the Romans at that time was led by a great chief named Caradoc. The tribes which he commanded were brave and fierce. Many of them had come from Wales, and for four years they kept on fighting the Roman army whenever they seemed to have a chance of beating it.

Caradoc, or, as the Romans called him, Caractacus, was a brave and noble chief. The Romans, who at all times admired courage and skill in battle, had great respect for him, though he gave them much trouble.

At last a general with a larger army was sent against Caractacus, and he and his Britons could no longer stand their ground. They fought as



Coin of the Emperor Claudius (from the original in the British Museum)

long as they could, but the Romans pressed on and killed such numbers of them that the rest had to flee to the woods and hills.

Caractacus fled for safety to his stepmother, who was queen of one of the British tribes.



A Roman Ballista used at Sieges for Throwing Stones

Instead of helping him, she gave him up to his enemies, and he was taken as a prisoner to Rome.

Caractacus, with other captives, had to walk through the streets of Rome behind the chariot of Claudius, who had returned after the victory. They were taken to the great hall of the Emperor's palace, where the noble British chief, instead of kneeling before the Emperor, spoke out boldly, saying:

“If I had been mean enough to promise to obey your laws, and to be your servant and slave, I might still have been a king in Britain, but I should have been king only in name.

“It is because I chose to be your prisoner rather than your servant, and because I would rather go to death or be a slave than be false to my country, that I am here to-day.

“You are called conqueror, but I am conqueror, too, for I am a prisoner because I would not betray my country.”

Claudius and his generals were so pleased with the bold and noble speech of Caractacus that they set him free. He stayed for a long time in Rome, not as a prisoner, but as a friend of the Emperor.

---

### A Warrior Queen

After the conquest of Britain by Claudius, the island became a Roman province, and great numbers of Romans came to live there; but the fighting went on for many years after Caractacus was taken prisoner. The Britons could not endure the hard and cruel rule of their Roman masters, who beat them and made them

slaves, and took from them everything they had.

There were still some British chiefs or kings who ruled over different parts of the country.

One of these, when he died, left the half of his land and of his horses and cattle to his queen and his two daughters, and the other half to the Romans.

He hoped that if he gave the Romans half of what he had, they would let his queen and daughters live in peace. In this he was greatly mistaken, for the Romans took all his property, and his queen and daughters were left without land or cattle.

The name of this queen was Boadicea. She was queen of the Iceni, a very large tribe of the Britons, who occupied a large tract of country.



Roman Swords

- 1, Found near Bonn, inscribed with maker's name "Sabini". Blade 2' 8" long.
- 2, Original in British Museum. Scabbard 1' 10" long.
- 3, Dagger and Sheath. Blade 13" long.
- 4, Dagger and Sheath.



A ROMAN TRIUMPH

From the painting by F. W. W. Topham, R.I., in the Leicester Art Gallery, England





Feeling that she had been wronged, Boadicea went to the Roman governor to complain of having been so badly treated. Instead of helping her, he ordered his soldiers to take her away and beat her with rods. Her two daughters were also ill-used for trying to defend their mother.

Boadicea, as queen of a great tribe, felt that she had been made to suffer shame at the hands of the Romans, so she called on her own people and other tribes to come and help her to take revenge on them.

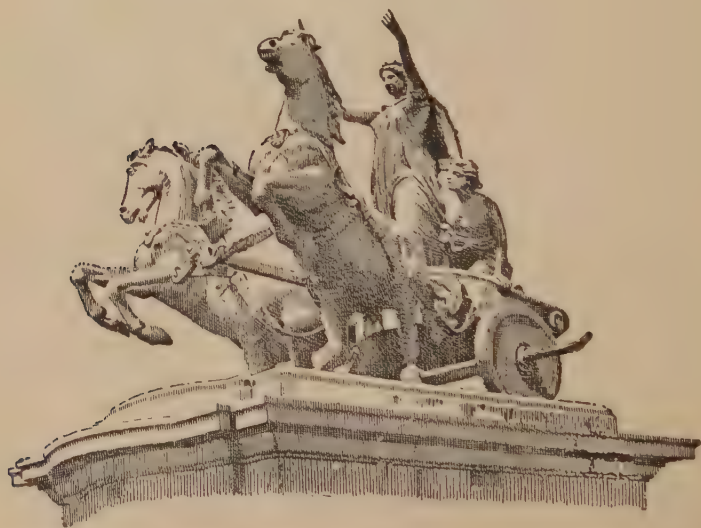
The larger part of the Roman army was fighting with the Britons in the west of Wales, and Boadicea led her men to the places where the Romans had built towns, but which at that time were almost stripped of defenders.

As they had few soldiers to help them, these Roman townspeople could not long withstand the attacks of the Britons. Great numbers of them were killed and their dwellings set on fire. After this Boadicea led her warriors to London, where they burned the houses and killed nearly all the people.

By this time the Roman general and his army were coming back. They had defeated the Britons in Wales, where they had been

fighting, and now they made haste to reach London, in order that they might conquer the tribes who followed Boadicea.

The British queen was in no way daunted, though she knew that hers was the last British army that would be able to fight against the power of Rome. The Britons had moved several miles to the east of London, where they built a strong camp in a forest. The Romans followed them, and made another camp not far off.

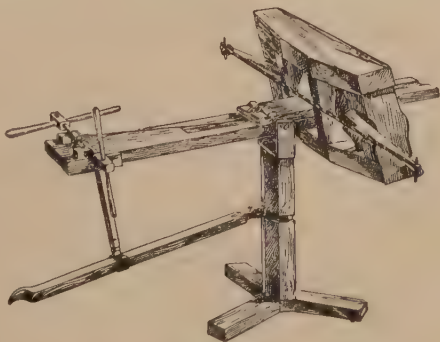


Boadicea in her War Chariot (from the sculpture on Westminster Bridge, London)

Boadicea, with her two daughters, led her army herself. She was a tall, noble-looking woman, and as she stood in her great war chariot, in the midst of her army of many thousands of Britons, she made a fine picture. Her long, flowing hair fell around her to her waist, and she wore the golden necklace which showed that she was a queen.

With a wild charge the Britons swept, like a wave, upon the enemy's center. The Roman line was shaken but it did not break; the soldiers were well armed and were used to war. Manfully the Romans fought, and ere long they began to gain ground. Soon the army of Boadicea turned and fled, while the Romans, following hard, cut them down.

Queen Boadicea hid in the woods, with a few of her tribe, who guarded her. Both her daughters had been killed, and she knew that if she were made prisoner she would be treated with great cruelty.



Roman Stone-throwing Engine

Rather than give herself up to the hated Romans, she took poison, and so died.

After the death of this brave but unhappy queen, the Romans marched through the country, killing many thousands of the Britons, and burning their houses and crops. Winter came on, but the Romans did not stop till at last the Britons had to give in.

---

### Agricola and the Caledonians ✓

Among the soldiers who fought in the Roman army that defeated Boadicea was a young officer named Agricola. He had shown himself so brave and skillful in the conduct of his troops, that the governor thought very highly of him, and often asked him to share his tent.

After the great battle in which Boadicea lost so many of her warriors, Agricola returned to Rome; but seventeen years later, in A.D. 78, he was sent to Britain as governor of the province.

We know a great deal of the good work he did as governor from the writings of his son-in-law, Tacitus, who wrote the story of his life.

When Agricola came to Britain he saw that





Dolmen at Plas Newydd, Anglesey.  
The scene of Druidical religious rites.

the island would never have peace until the power of the priests, or Druids as they were called, was ended.

These Druids were wiser and more learned than any of the people around them. They were the real rulers, and had more power than the chiefs. They lived near groves of oak trees, which were looked upon as sacred places, where no one might go unless leave were given by the priests.

Among the things which the Britons looked upon as sacred was the mistletoe, which grew on the oak tree. Every New Year's Day the people would meet at these groves. There the

Druids, clothed in their long white robes and crowned with oak leaves, would lead the way to cut the sacred mistletoe with a knife of gold.

The branches of mistletoe were then hung up, and chiefs and people would sit down to a great feast. The custom of hanging up branches of mistletoe about the time of the New Year has lasted ever since.

When Agricola came to Britain he made up his mind to attack the stronghold of the Druids in the island of Mona, now called Anglesey.

So, by a rapid march, he crossed the country and arrived at the Menai Straits.

There he found the shores of Mona crowded with British warriors. In front of them stood the Druids in their long white robes, singing their wild songs. Old women with streaming hair and haggard eyes, dressed in dark, ragged clothes, ran up and down the British ranks, screaming and waving smoking torches.



A Druid

At first the Roman sol-

diers were afraid, for they thought these were beings of another world. But their leader gave orders to cross over to the island. Slinging their weapons on their backs and carrying their shields on their shoulders, the soldiers swam the Straits and soon put the mob to flight.

The sacred groves of oak trees were burned, and everybody put to death that could be found. In this way the power of the Druids was destroyed, and never again do we find them causing any trouble.

But Agricola was more than an able general, he was also a good and just governor. He did not treat the Britons harshly as other governors had done, nor did he rob and oppress them, but he tried to win them over by kindness and fair government.

He taught the Britons to drain the great marshes, to clear the forests and till the ground. He showed them how to build towns and make bridges.

But during the first seven



A Pict

years he was in Britain, Agricola was greatly annoyed by the attacks of the Picts or “ painted men ”, who lived in North Britain, or Caledonia, as it was called by the Romans. To keep them back, Agricola built a chain of forts between the Firths of Clyde and Forth.

But still the Caledonians swept down into South Britain, not once, but over and over again. So Agricola led his soldiers against these warlike tribes, and advanced as far as the Grampian Hills. Here he thoroughly defeated them in a battle.

The highland Picts might be beaten in battle, but they could not be subdued. Their mountains and wooded glens were fortresses stronger than any castle they could have built.

Agricola, therefore, did not follow up his victory, but retreated to the south of the country, which became, for the time being, a part of the Roman province of Britain. He afterwards sailed around every part of Britain, and thus made sure that it was an island.

The governor's good work, however, was not allowed to go on, as the Emperor of Rome became jealous of him. So Agricola was recalled to Rome, where he died a few years later.

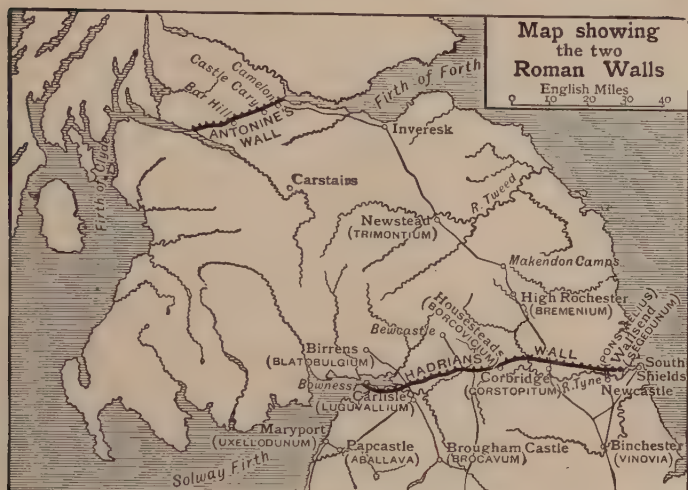






AN ATTACK ON THE ROMAN WALL

From the painting by Robert Spence, exhibited at the Royal Academy, London



Hadrian's Wall, built A. D. 120; Antonine's Wall, built A. D. 143

## The Great Roman Walls in Britain

As we have seen, the prudent Agricola built a chain of forts between the Firths of the Forth and the Clyde to keep the Caledonians from entering South Britain. These forts served also to guard his rear when he left the Lowlands for the Highlands.

Stretching about forty miles, these forts did duty for many years, but in the course of time the Picts again broke through and attacked the people in Britain.

About forty years after Agricola, the Roman



Roman Coin showing  
the Emperor Hadrian

Emperor Hadrian, wishing to see with his own eyes how each part of the great empire was governed, set out from Rome on a visit to all the provinces. On this journey he is said to have marched bareheaded twenty miles a day. He cheerfully shared with the humblest soldiers all their hardships.

In the course of this great journey he visited Britain, and built a great wall right across the north of England from the Solway to the mouth of the Tyne.

This wall is known as the "Wall of Hadrian", and was of great strength. It was fifteen feet high, and broad enough on the top for four men to walk abreast, while in front there was a deep ditch thirty-four feet wide. At every mile there was a gate, with sentry stands and a castle, while 12,500 Roman soldiers were stationed along the wall.

The tribes of Caledonia, however, still broke through the wall and marched into the southern part of Britain. And in the reign of Antonine, one of the good Roman emperors, another wall or earthwork was built to keep out

these tribes, following the line of Agricola's forts between the Firths of the Forth and Clyde. This wall formed the northern limit of the Roman Empire.

Though attempts were made to bring the Caledonians under the Roman rule, this was never really done. The greatest of these attempts was made in the year 208. The Emperor Severus, although so ill and so old that he had to be carried on a litter, advanced with an army into North Britain as far as the Moray Firth.

The Caledonians did not risk a battle, but at every turn attacked the Roman army night and day. It is said that when Severus returned to the wall, his army was reduced by fully 50,000 men.

Severus now began to strengthen the great earthwork between the Forth and the Clyde, but he was not able to keep the Caledonians from entering South Britain, or to add Caledonia to the Roman Empire.

As one writer says: "The masters of the fairest and most wealthy climates of the globe turned with contempt from gloomy hills assailed by the winter tempest, from lakes concealed in a blue mist, and from cold lonely

heaths over which the deer of the forest were chased by a troop of naked barbarians''. These naked barbarians were the ancestors of the Scotch Highlanders of modern times.

---

### **What the Romans did for Britain**

The Romans were not soldiers only; they could do a great deal more than fight. They were a great people in many ways, and when they had beaten the Britons with the sword, they set them to work with spade, axe, and plough.

For nearly four hundred years the Romans held Britain as a part of the Roman Empire, and during that time the country was greatly changed for the better.

Many of the dense forests which grew in various parts of Britain were cut down. Marshes were drained, and well-built towns were founded where at one time there had been nothing but wild underwood or swamp.

Much grain and fruit was grown, and Britain soon became a great farming country, and supplied grain and cattle to Rome and Germany.

Roads were made, running from London into all parts of the country, and passing through forests and over rivers. Parts of the great Roman roads are still to be seen in many places in Britain.

Mines of tin, lead, and copper were worked, and the metal got from them was sent across the sea to Gaul and

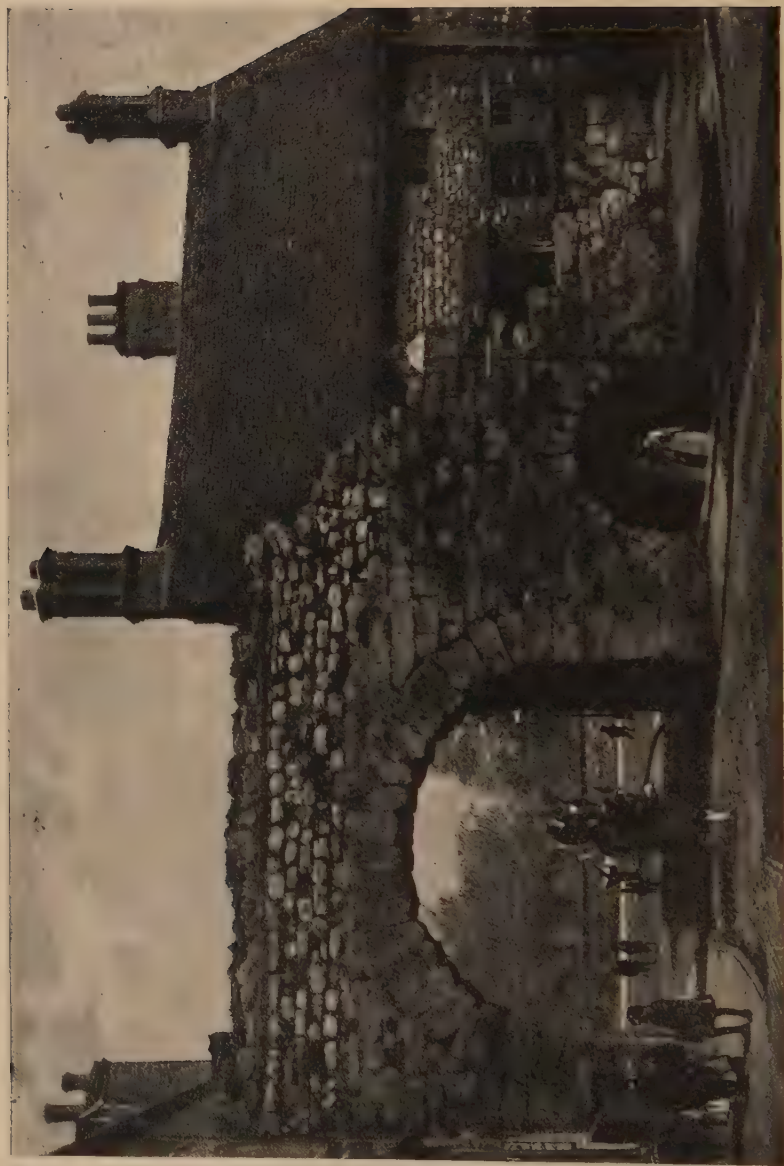
Italy. One writer speaks of these mines in this way: "Very strange are the mines where the Britons find lead and iron, for some are narrow, deep cuttings of forty feet in the earth, yet so strait that only one man can walk along them. There are also winding passages of two hundred yards in the hills, through which the miners creep with little lamps tied to their foreheads."

The rich Romans built themselves splendid villas in the country, paving the floors with colored tiles, and adorning the rooms with graceful pillars and fine carvings. Remains of Roman houses and pottery are to this day sometimes dug up. Fine temples, baths, and



Roman Helmet found  
in Lancashire





NEWPORT GATE, LINCOLN

The finest existing example of Roman architecture in Britain

public buildings adorned the streets of the greater towns.

Many of the Britons learned to speak Latin, which was the language of the Romans, and children were taught to read and write. The young men were made soldiers in the Roman army, and were taken away to fight in other lands.

It was during this time, too, that the story of Christ first became known in Britain. In many of the Roman households in Britain there were Christian slaves, and from these many of the Britons no doubt learned the story of the Carpenter of Nazareth.

Indeed, we are told that once a Christian in secret carved on a large stone the letters of Christ's name. This stone was meant to serve as the threshold of a Roman villa. He placed it there with the letters underneath, so that everyone belonging to that household having to pass over it would, as he thought, become a Christian. This stone was found sixteen hundred years after, when the buried villa was discovered. How



Roman Shoe found in London

many feet must have trod upon that stone as it lay there hidden and forgotten!

---

### **The First British Martyr**

As we have seen, there arose during the reign of Augustus a new power among the peoples of the world. In the little village of Bethlehem was born Jesus, who taught men a new religion.

A little later, Paul, one of His followers, spread the knowledge of Jesus to Rome. And by the end of the second century Christianity, as this new religion was called, had spread to the uttermost parts of the great Roman Empire. Soldiers in Rome who heard the “good news”, or “gospel”, as it came to be called, carried it with them wherever they went.

Many Christians came to Britain from Rome. They had to meet in secret, because the Roman rulers wished, and often tried, to put them to death; but numbers of people were glad to hear their teaching.

At last, about the year 300, the Emperor of Rome tried to kill all the Christians. He ordered all the churches to be pulled down,



St. Alban's Abbey (now the Cathedral) begun in 1077

and all the copies of the Holy Scriptures that could be found to be burned in the market-places. Thousands of Christians were slain, burnt or beaten to death in places where the Romans had the power.

An order was sent to the Roman governors of Britain to hunt and slay all the Christian priests and their followers. According to an old writer there lived at that time a Christian priest in the town of Verulamium. The Roman soldiers were seeking to take his life, and he took refuge in the house of a kindly Roman named Alban, who gave him shelter.

One day, as Alban stood watching at the door, he saw the Roman soldiers drawing near. "They have tracked the deer to his hiding-place," said Alban, "but though the dogs have scented his blood, they shall not lap it in my house."

So he changed clothes with the hunted priest and let him escape. Alban thereupon gave himself up to the soldiers and was brought before the Roman judge, who soon found out the mistake. So angry did the judge become, that he declared that Alban ought to die, as he had given shelter to a rebel. He offered, however, to spare his life if he would sacrifice to the Roman gods. This Alban at once refused to do.

"To what family do you belong?" asked the judge.

"I am called Alban by my parents. I worship the living and true God, who has created all things," he replied.

"If you would enjoy long life, it were well for you now to sacrifice to the gods," said the judge.

"Nay," was Alban's reply; "the gods you worship are no gods. I cannot bow down to worship what is of no worth."

Then he was ordered to be beaten with rods,



and to be led forth to be beheaded. The place where he was to suffer was a flower-crowned hill, and passing through the great crowds that had gathered there, Alban knelt and prayed for his enemies and himself.

The headsman was so moved by the prayers of the noble Alban, that he refused to do his work, and another was called in, by whom they were both killed.

The old name of the town was changed to that of St. Albans; and, five hundred years afterwards, one of the Saxon kings caused a fine church to be built there, and called it the Abbey Church of St. Albans.



### Constantine and the New Rome

No sooner, however, had the Roman Emperor sent out his orders against the Christians, than he gave up the throne. It looked as if he wished to commit the work of killing the Christians to other hands. He retired to his beautiful seaside palace, where he spent his leisure hours in building, planting, and gardening.

Before he gave up his power, he divided the Empire into two parts, a western and an east-





Constantine (from the statue  
at Rome)

ern, in order that he might deal more firmly with the many attacks made thereon. Over each of these parts he set an emperor, who had the title of Augustus. Each of these emperors chose one to help him, who was called Cæsar.

But the Emperor had not taken steps to make sure that those who came after him should be fit to rule, and so for years there was great strife among the four governors of the Empire. When things were going badly, one of the governors sent a messenger to the retired Emperor, asking him to take up once again the duties of government. But his answer was: "Come and see the fine cabbages I have planted".

In this strife the victor was Constantine the Great. His father at one time was governor of Britain, and his mother, it is said, was the

daughter of an innkeeper who lived in Britain. Her tomb lies among the grand sculptures and paintings to be seen in the beautiful palace of the Pope at Rome. His father having died, the army proclaimed Constantine Emperor.

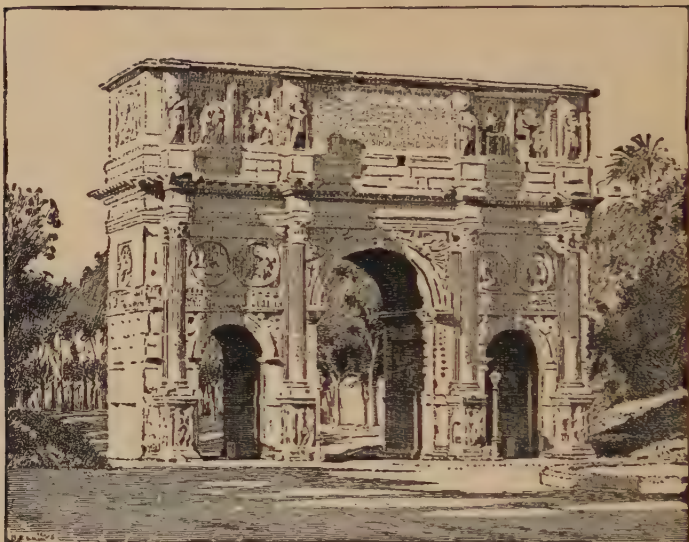
Before his victory over the Augustus of the West, which was fought on the banks of the Tiber about nine miles from Rome, Constantine had already shown great goodwill to the Christians.

He himself relates that on the day before this battle there was seen at noon in the sky a fiery cross, and over it words which mean, "By this conquer".

Again, the same night, a vision appeared to Constantine in his sleep, bidding him mark a cross on the shields of his soldiers, surmounted



Bishop of the Early Church.  
The Greek word is "basileios"  
= kingly (from a mosaic in S.  
Sophia, Constantinople)



Arch of Constantine at Rome, built in Memory of his Victory

with the first two letters of the Greek word for “Christ”.

From that time he took the Cross for his standard, and, having become Emperor, he made the Christian faith the religion of the Roman Empire.

He then resolved to found a new capital, from which he might more easily than from Rome watch over the Goths, who were now beginning to attack the Empire. So he chose an old city which stands on the point where

the rushing stream of the Bosphorus widens into the Sea of Marmora.

“The prospect of beauty, of safety, and of wealth united in a single spot, was sufficient to justify the choice of Constantine.” It has been called the strongest spot on earth; it commands two seas, and holds the gate between Europe and Asia.

The day on which the new capital was begun, was kept with great pomp by the Romans. On foot, with a lance in his hand, the Emperor himself led the solemn procession. He guided the line that was traced to mark out the new capital. Those present at length ventured to say that he was making the city too large.

“I shall still advance,” replied Constantine, “till He, the unseen guide, who marches before me, thinks proper to stop.”

The name which Constantine gave to the city was New Rome. But the name it has always borne is Constantinople — the city of Constantine. It soon became the capital of the Eastern or Greek Empire. (See map on page 73.)

In order to make it as much like Rome as possible, Constantine built a forum, or public square, a circus, and baths. Many of the an-



Gold Coin of Constantine (from the original in the British Museum)

cient cities of the Empire were stripped of their finest statues to adorn the new capital. Constantine set up here

the golden "mile-stone" to mark the central point of the world, while a lighthouse was built to guide ships to the harbor.

Constantine even built houses for the Roman senators on the exact model of their Roman palaces.

The city was finished in a few years, or, according to one account, in a few months, and in May, 330, it was declared ready. Games lasting over forty days were held, and the people were given wine and oil, grain and bread, money and provisions. A column of marble, on which was engraved the title of Second or New Rome, was set up at this great festival.







THE BATTLE OF CONSTANTINE

After the painting by Giulio Romano in the Vatican, Rome





## The Goths at the Gates

By the end of the fourth century the Roman Empire was beginning to fall to pieces. The East and West had been divided under two emperors, with Rome as the capital of the Western Empire, and Constantinople as capital of the Eastern.

Britain and other places had to be given up, because the Romans were no longer able to defend them. And soon the nations of the north were invading the Empire, whose soldiers could not stand against them, and whose rulers often humbled themselves to buy off such fierce enemies.

The first of these foes were the Goths, who came from the shores of the Baltic. Working their way south, they had occupied in the third century the whole of Southern Russia, and westward along the northern banks of the Danube, and made it their own.

They were tall, fair-haired people dressed in linen smocks. Around their arms and necks they wore gold and silver rings. The warriors had fine horses, and were armed with lances and heavy swords. Most of them wore coats

of mail and helmets adorned with plumes, horns, or dragons.

More than once they had broken through the Roman frontier and destroyed the cities lying to the south. The Emperor of the Romans had been forced to give them large sums of money before they would agree to leave the Empire in peace.

In flat-bottomed boats, made of timber only, without nails, and covered with a shelving roof when tempests arose, the Goths had put to sea. From the Crimea they sailed around the shores of the Black Sea, and had even reached the city of Ephesus, where they had robbed the famous temple of Diana. (See map on page 73.) Others of them had



A Portion of the "Aqua Claudia," one of the aqueducts which supplied Rome with water: destroyed by the Goths

landed in Greece and marched towards Athens. The booty that fell into the hands of the Goths was immense.

It is said that when they reached Athens they gathered together all the books of the

Greeks in order that they might set fire to them. But one of their chiefs cried out to them to leave to the Greeks their books, for as long as they were spending their days in the study of these, they were not likely to cause the Goths any trouble in war.

So great was the ruin they wrought, that we are told the Goths left "nothing alive — not even the beasts of the fields; nothing was left, but growing brambles and thick forests".

About the year 375 A.D. the Huns began to press upon the Goths, so that with outstretched arms and bitter cries they besought the Roman



Gothic Horsemen in the Roman Army  
(from the Column of Antoninus, Rome)

Emperor to allow them to cross the Danube and settle on some waste lands lying to the south of the river.

The Emperor agreed to their request on condition that they should lay aside their arms before crossing. He also made them promise that they would give up their sons to be brought up as Romans. Nothing was to be left them except their lives and the lands in which they lived.



Ancient Gothic  
Swords

When the order came to ferry over the Danube the whole of the Gothic nation, it was found to be a very difficult task. The stream of the Danube, which in those parts is above a mile broad, had been swollen by great rains. In the crossing, many were swept away and drowned by the rapid current. It took them many days and nights to cross, for the people numbered more than two hundred thousand. Those who were set to count them gave it up in despair.

The children of the Goths were at once sent to the distant

provinces, and as the long train of captives passed through the cities, their gay and splendid dress and their strong warlike figures roused the surprise and envy of the people of the provinces.

The treaty, however, was soon broken by the Romans. They sold to the Goths the vilest food at the dearest prices; in place of wholesome food they filled the markets with the flesh of dogs and of unclean animals that had died of disease. To get bread the Goths were even forced to sell their sons and daughters, who were made slaves by the Romans.

This treatment the Goths suffered very quietly for some time, but at length they grew angry. They were joined by another tribe, who had been shut out of the Empire by the Romans, and together they rose against their common enemy.



*Alaric* ✓  
**Alaric, King of the Goths**

After a while the Goths were defeated, and were allowed to live in peace in the Roman Empire. But on the death of their conqueror they again took up arms against the Romans. Other tribes of Goths crossed the Danube on the ice to join them. This time they were led by their young king, Alaric, a bold and skillful soldier, who had learned the art of war as a leader in the armies of Rome.

He first led the Goths against Constantinople, but finding its walls too strong to be stormed, he turned west and overran Greece. Only Athens was spared, for Alaric, as one old writer tells us, fancied he saw the goddess Athene walking around the lofty walls of the citadel, and the old heroes of Greece guarding the walls of the ancient city.

But he now set out for Italy, tempted by its fame, its beauty, and its wealth, which he had seen on his former visits to that country. His great desire was to plant the Gothic standard on the walls of Rome, and to enrich his army with the spoils of that city. For he said that, as he was worshipping one day in a sacred

grove, he had heard a voice saying over and over again these words: "Go to Rome and make that city desolate".

Crossing the snow-covered Alps, he led his large army into the beautiful plains of Northern Italy. The Emperor of the Romans fled before the advance of the Goths, but one of his generals defeated Alaric in two great battles and drove him north again. The Emperor and his defender then marched to Rome, and held sports in honor of their victory.

Seven years Alaric waited before he once again crossed the Alps. The general who had twice beaten him was now out of favor at Court, and the weak-minded Emperor at last put him to death. The way was now clear for Alaric. This time he took city after city, and at last, in 410, pitched his camp under the walls of Rome. He made up his mind to starve the city into surrender. This he did by seizing the port at the mouth



Gothic Soldier

of the Tiber, so that the great wheat-ships from Egypt could not land their cargoes.

At last the Roman nobles sent out two of their number to ask Alaric if he would make peace with them. When they entered his tent, they declared that the Romans were still ready to fight. They still had arms, and were well able to use them. They, therefore, begged for fair terms, and said they would rather die than give up the city to the Goths.

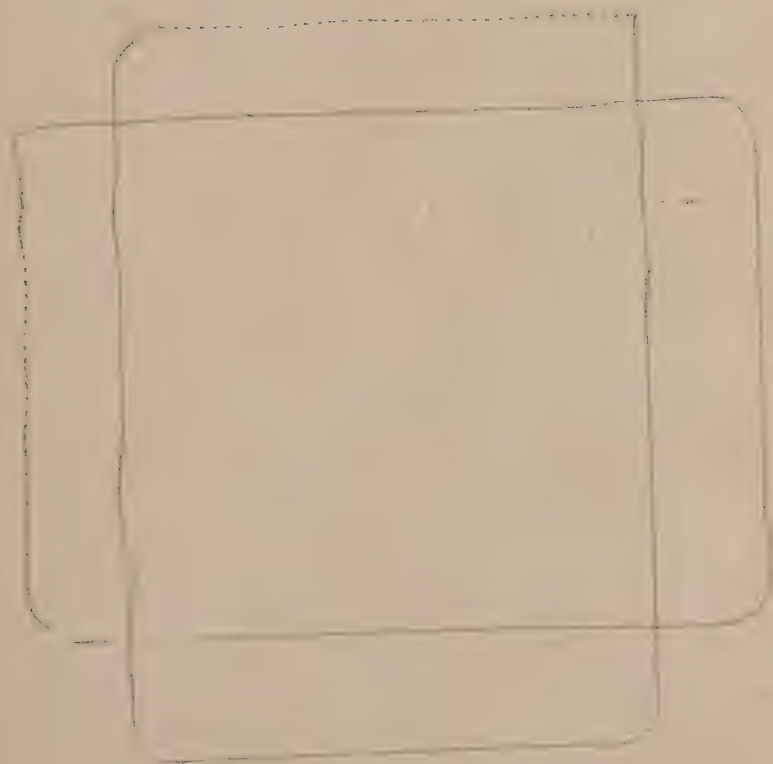
If he refused, he might sound his trumpets and prepare to give battle to the Romans. They warned him, too, that they were great in numbers.

Alaric laughed, and answered them with a Gothic proverb: "The thicker the hay, the easier it is mowed".

But the city was without food. What was to be done? The proud Romans asked, "What terms, then, will you take?"

"All your gold, all your silver, the best of your precious things, and all your barbarian slaves. Otherwise I go on with the siege," was the reply.

"If such, O King! are your demands, what do you intend to leave us?" asked the sad Romans.





THE CHARIOT RACE

From the painting by Professor A. Wagner in the Manchester Art Gallery



“Your lives,” replied the haughty conqueror, with a grim smile. They trembled and retired.

After some talk they agreed to pay Alaric the strange ransom of five thousand pounds of gold, thirty thousand pounds of silver, four thousand robes of silk, three thousand pieces of fine scarlet cloth, and three thousand pounds of pepper, usually sold at that time at ten shillings the pound.

On August 24, 410, the Goths entered the gates of Rome. For six days they plundered the city, and so much damage did they do, that



to this day we speak of anyone who is careless of beautiful things as a Goth.

The news of the taking of Rome was carried to the exiled Emperor, who thought more of his hens and chickens than of the danger to his Empire.

“Rome has perished,” cried the messenger, on reaching the Emperor.

“That is not so, for I have just fed her,” said the feeble-minded Emperor.

He meant that he had just fed one of his favorite hens, which was called “Rome”. And he appeared greatly delighted when he found that it was not his hen that had perished.

After the plundering of Rome, the Goths, under Alaric, marched south, spoiling the rich villas as they went along. They then tried to cross into Sicily, meaning to pass over into Africa. But a storm wrecked their boats in the strait, and the Goths, being afraid of the sea, returned to Italy.

A short time after, Alaric fell ill of a fever and died. The Goths were resolved that the Romans should not dig up Alaric’s body out of his “barrow”, or grave, and scatter his bones to the winds. So they put no tombstone

over the great King, but turned aside the small river which flowed near.

There in the river bed they set Alaric, armed and clad in his coat of mail, sitting upright upon his horse, with gold, silver, and jewels. They also buried with him a number of captive maids and youths.

Then they turned back the river into its bed, and slew the Italian slaves who had done the work, so that no man might know where Alaric lay; and to this day no man knows.

---

### **The Last Fight in the Coliseum**

The greatest theatre in the world was the Coliseum at Rome. The building was four stories high, and so large that it could hold 40,000 people, or, as some say, 80,000. It was in the form of a circus, and in the middle was the arena, a large round place, where the games and races were held.

At first it was used for chariot races. But later on we find that the arena was turned into a forest, where wild beasts were set free, and men armed with spears were made to fight against them.



### THE COLISEUM, ROME

Built during the Reign of Vespasian. Faced with white marble, it was one of the finest buildings the world has seen. In the Middle Ages it was used as a fortress and ultimately as a quarry for other buildings



The Dying Gaul, known also as the Dying Gladiator (from the statue in the Capitoline Museum, Rome)

Sometimes, instead of placing armed men before the beasts, it was found more exciting to let loose the animals on those who were naked and bound.

But the Romans liked best the fights between men armed with swords. They fought with each other until one of them was slain. If, however, the people wished to spare the life of the one who was defeated, they would turn their thumbs upward.

When some of the Romans became Christians, they were very often put to death by torture. One way in which they were tortured was to be thrown into the arena to fight the lions.

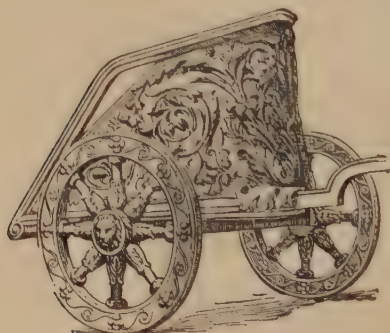
Little by little, however, the Christian religion made its way in the world, until, as we have seen, Constantine made it the religion of the Empire. Then these shameful things were given up, and the Coliseum was used only as a circus. Sometimes the old desire to have one of these cruel shows in the Coliseum came upon the Romans.

When Alaric, the leader of the Goths, was defeated by a Roman general, the people of Rome were filled with joy. They rushed to the Coliseum to cheer the general who had freed their country from the invader.

As in the days of old, a hunt of wild beasts was held. Then two men, armed with swords, walked into the arena. The people thought they were going to have one of their old fights. They shouted with joy, when suddenly there

appeared in the arena an old man with bare head and bare feet.

He was a hermit, who had many years before gone away to the hills around Rome to



Roman Racing Chariot



live alone, and try to lead a holy life far away from the wickedness of the world.

When he saw the crowds of people in holiday dress making for the Coliseum, he felt sure that the cruel fights would begin again, and much innocent blood would be shed.

To prevent this or die in the attempt, the holy hermit made up his mind to enter the Coliseum. When the crowd saw him standing in the arena, they shouted to him to go away and stop his preaching. The two men who were about to fight thereupon came forward and forced him to stand aside while they fought. But the old man placed himself between them, and thus stopped the fight.

Showers of stones were hurled at the hermit by the angry people, but he would not move. Then the men tried to remove him from the arena, and as he struggled to resist their efforts he was killed.

The poor hermit died, but his noble work was done. The people grew so ashamed of themselves that the fights in the Coliseum were given up from that day.







*Sanction*  
Attila, "The Scourge of God"

On the grassy uplands lying between China and Siberia and girdled by snow-topped mountains whose lower slopes are covered with great forests, lived the Huns. These Huns belonged to the great Mongol race, who to-day tend their flocks and herds on the steppes of Central Asia.

On these boundless plains, man can live only as a wanderer. In summer the grass steppes of the north yield him pasture for his flocks and herds. But in winter the north is buried deep in snow, and the herdsman, with his horses, sheep, camels, and oxen, must journey to the valleys of the south. Here the pasture is scant enough, but man and beast manage to live through the winter, till spring brings a welcome release from their frost-bound prison, and they journey north again.

Some of these tribes may wander as much as two thousand miles in the year, so they must needs be hardy. A new-born baby is washed daily in the open air, summer and winter alike, for six weeks, and after that never again touches water for the rest of its life! At three



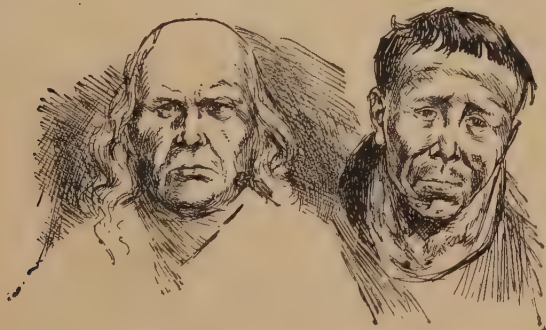
ATTILA ON THE MARCH TO PARIS

From the mural painting by E. Delaunay in the Panthéon, Paris



or four a child can sit free before its mother on horseback, and at six it can ride like a hunter. With horses to match, it is little wonder that these riders of the steppe can outdistance all rivals. On their raids across the desert they can cover as much as 650 miles in five days.

This hard life makes a hardy people. They can live upon mare's milk, and go for days without drink. In a snowstorm, men have been known to live forty days without any food. Used to such hardships, these wanderers had no pity for their foes. Such terror did they cause, that men thought them less than human. For they were dreadful to behold. Bow-legged from always riding, with yellow faces, narrow, slanted eyes, and black hair as stiff as a horse's



Mongols of the Present Day

mane, they seemed like devils to the panic-stricken people who fled before them.

Such were the people who in the fifth century broke into Europe. Under their fierce king, Attila, these horsemen, clad in black armor and fur cloaks, laid waste the district lying between the Volga and the Danube. The inhabitants who were not destroyed were forced to follow in his train.

"What fortress, what city can hope to exist, if it is our pleasure that it should be blotted out from the earth?" cried the proud Attila. A small, ugly, big-headed man who could neither read nor write, he was yet shrewd and cunning.

Attila led his soldiers into the Eastern Empire, and the Roman Emperor collected a large army to oppose him, but was defeated in three great battles. Constantinople owed its safety to its strong walls, and to the fact that Attila's horsemen were not able to conduct a siege. But he destroyed seventy cities, and forced the Emperor to buy him off with large sums of money.

In A.D. 450 Attila turned his arms against the Western Empire, and marched as far as the middle of Gaul. Here he was met by the leader

of the Romans and Theodoric, the King of the West Goths, who forced him to withdraw his troops from the city of Orleans, which he had for some time been trying to take.

He then returned to the wide plains of the River Marne, where the army of the West was waiting to meet him. Here a great battle was fought near where the city of Chalons now stands.

At first the Huns were the victors, Theodoric was slain, and the ranks of the Romans and Goths were broken. Attila now looked upon victory as certain, when the Gothic prince, on the death of his father, took the command and led the brave Goths, who were eager to avenge the death of their chief.

Countless thousands of warriors were left dead on the field of battle, which, as the story goes, is still haunted by their ghosts, rising every year on the day of battle to fight it out once more in the clouds.

Attila, retiring to his camp of wagons, gathered together all the wooden shields, saddles, and other baggage into a vast funeral pyre, and made up his mind to perish in the flames rather than yield. But by the advice of the Roman general the Huns were allowed to retreat



without much further loss, though they were pursued as far as the Rhine by the Franks.

In the following year Attila had recovered his strength, and then he invaded Italy. He destroyed many of the large cities, and drove the people into the Alps and the Apennines and to the mud banks of the shallow Adriatic, where they founded the city of Venice.

On reaching the walls of Rome he was met by the famous Pope Leo, and a great horror took hold of Attila. He agreed to spare the city and retire, on receiving a large sum of money.

By 453 " The Scourge of God ", as he named himself, was ready with a large army to invade Italy again. Before starting he was married to a beautiful German girl named Hilda. When the Huns came into his tent the morning after his marriage, they found the girl weeping, or seeming to weep, by the side of the King.

" The Scourge of God " lay dead at last. She said that he had burst a blood-vessel, but soon it was whispered that the fair Hilda had slain her newly-wed husband.

It is said that his body was placed in three coffins, the first of gold, the second of silver,

and the third of iron. The splendid harness of his horse, together with his arms and armor, was buried with him. We are told that the slaves employed to make his grave, like those who buried Alaric, were put to death, that none might betray the last resting-place of Attila.

Then the Huns scattered. The Teutons, who had obeyed the fierce Attila, turned against their conquerors, and on the great plain between the Drave and the Danube a battle was fought, in which the Teutons were the victors. Thirty thousand Huns fell on that fatal field, and the rest fled into the heart of Asia, into the great tablelands whence they had come.

So the peril of the Huns was gone, and Europe was saved. But the story of Attila and Theodoric and their warrior hosts lingered among the legends of the



Theodoric, King of the West Goths, who helped the Romans to defeat Attila, in Armor of the 15th Century (from the statue at Innsbruck)

German people, and was told in one of the greatest poems of the German language.

---

### The Story of Geneviève

In a little village about two miles from Paris was born about the year 424 A. D. a little girl who was to perform great deeds, and save the city of Paris from the attacks of fierce foes.

At the time of her birth the Gauls had been tamed by the Romans, and had been taught to be Christians. Even as a little child Geneviève became an earnest Christian, and the people of her village loved her greatly because of her pious and unselfish acts and her care of the poor.

While her parents were alive, she looked after her father's sheep and worked at the spinning wheel. On the death of her parents she went to live with her godmother. As she grew to womanhood her good deeds became known far and wide.

But one day the quiet and peace of the little village was rudely broken by the news

that Attila, "The Scourge of God", had crossed the Rhine, and with his host of savage Huns was marching towards Paris.

The villagers, taking their goods and treasures, were about to flee in terror from the place. But Geneviève begged them to return to defend their homes, and to pray to God to free them from their cruel enemies.

At first they were not willing to go home. Just at that time, however, a present from the Bishop of Paris was brought for Geneviève, and the people, seeing in what great esteem she was held by the bishop, gave more heed to her words. Feeling ashamed of their cowardice, they let her lead them back to the village.

There they prepared to arm themselves, and at the same time to offer prayers for the safety of themselves and their homes. The prayers



Frankish Warrior  
(from the statue in the  
Roman German Mu-  
seum at Mainz)

were speedily answered, for news soon reached the village that the proud Attila had suffered a severe defeat at Chalons, as we read in the last chapter, and had been driven out of Gaul. After this Geneviève was held in honor for the wise counsel she had given to the village folk.

A few years later Paris was attacked by the Franks, who came from the north-east. They poured along the valley of the Seine and laid siege to the walls of Paris, which the Romans had built. These were strong enough to defend

the city, but the Franks made up their minds to starve the people.

It was at this time that Geneviève showed her courage once again. Since none of the inhabitants were brave enough to venture outside the walls and get food for the women and children, who were dying of hunger, Geneviève



The ancient Abbey of St. Geneviève, Paris. The Square Tower is all that remains of the abbey.







ST. GENEVIEVE ENCOURAGES THE MEN OF PARIS

From the mural painting by E. Delaunay in the Panthéon, Paris

took a little boat, and with her own hands steered it down the river until she had passed the camp of the Franks.

Then she went from place to place begging the people to send food to the starving city. She begged so well that in a few days a number of boats laden with food were sailing up the river.

The Franks, it is said, regarded Geneviève's person as sacred, and so allowed her to pass.

In this way she saved Paris for the time. But later on, the leader of the Franks, Childeric, by name, captured the city. So much did he dread Geneviève's power, that he ordered her to be kept outside the city walls.

But on learning that a number of the townsfolk were to be put to death, she dressed herself in the garb of a shepherdess, and entered the city along with a number of country people. She passed unnoticed, and at once made for that part of the city walls where Childeric and his wild host were holding a feast.

What she saw was enough to make the stoutest heart quail, but the shepherdess with great courage approached the Frankish chief and, rebuking him for his cruelty, pleaded for the lives of her helpless fellow citizens.

Childeric trembled at her words, and, struck by her courage, at once granted the lives of the citizens and agreed to spare Paris.

Geneviève lived to a good old age, spending her days in deeds of charity and kindness. She died in the year 512, when Paris was ruled by Clovis, the son of Childeric.

The people of Paris looked upon her as the savior of their city, and took her as their patron saint.



The Sword of Childeric found at Tournai, France, in 1653.  
Now in the Louvre, Paris

---

## The Terrible Vandals

The Vandals belonged to the same family as the Goths. They first overran Gaul, having crossed the Rhine when it was frozen. Though the Franks for some time kept them in check, in the end the Vandals mastered Gaul.

They then crossed the Pyrenees into Spain. After settling for some time in this country, they were united under the rule of the King Genseric.

The King of the Vandals is said to have been of middle stature, and was lame in one leg owing to a fall from his horse. He was very slow of speech, and seldom let those around him know what he was meaning to do.

Genseric was asked by one of the Roman generals to cross over into Africa to help him in fighting against the savage Africans. He crossed the Straits of Gibraltar in vessels given to him by the Spaniards, who were eager to get rid of the Vandals.

The army numbered 50,000, and the wandering Moors must have been greatly surprised on beholding the dress and armor of the unknown strangers who had landed on their shores. Their fair complexions and blue eyes were so different from their own swarthy faces.

After helping the Roman general, the Vandals settled at Carthage, which was now as great and rich as it had been in early times. And soon the whole of the north of Africa, from Tangier to Tripoli, a ninety days' journey, was in the hands of Genseric. This meant a great loss to the Roman Empire, which had got most of its food supplies from Africa.

The Vandals, however, began to feel that, though this was a rich and fruitful country, it



Coin of Carthage

was very narrow and shut in. On one side was the sandy desert, and on the other the Mediterranean. Gen-

seric, therefore, cast his eyes towards the sea and made up his mind to get a large navy.

He soon got together a great fleet of Moors and Vandals, and, sailing across the Mediterranean, cast anchor at the mouth of the Tiber. On the third day he boldly advanced from the port of Ostia to the gates of Rome.

Rome was undefended, and was in danger of a more terrible sack than it had ever had. But once again it found a champion in Leo, Bishop of Rome. As a result of his pleading, the Vandals promised to spare the people and not to burn the buildings.

The pillage of the city lasted for fourteen days and nights, and all that remained of public or private wealth was taken away to the vessels of Genseric. With this great booty he carried off also many thousand prisoners—men, women, and children. The ships carrying statues and other works of art were wrecked, and their priceless cargo lost for ever.

Time and again Genseric sailed against the



Romans. In the spring of each year the Vandals raised a strong navy in the port of Carthage. This he commanded in person. His plans of attack were always kept secret until the moment came for the hoisting of sail.

When he was asked by his pilot what course he was to steer, he answered: "Leave the winds to guide your course; they will carry us to the coast of those with whom God is angry".

All the countries around the shores of the Mediterranean were visited by the Vandal fleet, and large spoils fell into the hands of the invaders. The Vandals were more eager for booty than for glory, and seldom did they attack fortified cities or engage any regular troops in open battle.

More than once the emperors of Rome sought to lessen the power of Genseric, but he inflicted defeat after defeat on both their army and navy, until in the end he became the tyrant of the Mediterranean.

The coasts of Italy, Greece, and Asia were plundered by him. He added to his dominions the island of Sicily, and before he died, at a good old age, he beheld the overthrow of the Empire of the West.





The Grave of St. Patrick, Downpatrick, Co. Down, Ireland

### “ The Groans of the Britons ”

When the Emperor Constantine became Christian, many people in Britain, as in all other parts of the Roman Empire, followed his lead. Churches were built and schools were opened. The people of Ireland also became Christians through the preaching of St. Patrick (432), and Ireland was early famous for both religion and learning.

But the Romans were now being attacked by so many barbarian tribes — the Goths, the Vandals, the Huns, and the Franks — that they

were obliged to call their distant armies home to guard their own capital; so they took away the soldiers who were in Britain.

The Britons had given up fighting while they had the Roman soldiers to do it for them. Now that they were left to themselves, they were not strong enough to drive back all the enemies who came to rob and steal.

Scarcely had the last Roman embarked on board the ships carrying them away to the defense of their country, when tribes of savage Picts renewed their assaults on the Roman wall. They battered down the castles, and made breaches here and there in the wall.

They also built ships, and, along with the Scots from Ireland, they laid waste the coasts of Britain from north to south, stealing cattle and setting fire to the crops. In this work they were joined by bands of Jutes and Saxons from Europe.

The Britons, in distress, sent to Rome to beg that the soldiers might come back to help them, but none could be spared. Again they sent a piteous letter to Aëtius, the conqueror of Attila, for help, saying: “ To Aëtius, now consul for the third time, the groans of the Britains . . . The barbarians drive us into the sea, the sea

throws us back upon the barbarians, and we have only the hard choice left us of perishing by the sword or the waves."

This message to Rome was called "the groans of the Britons". But the Romans had enough to do to fight against their own enemies, and could not send men to help the Britons.

At length, when all hope of help from this quarter had failed, the Britons, as we shall see in the next chapter, tried a new course.

---



### Hengist and Horsa

One of the British chiefs named Vortigern, who reigned in Kent, was in danger from the raids of the Picts. So he sent a message to two of the leaders of the Jute pirates or sea robbers to come and help him to drive out these savage enemies.

These Jutes came from the shores of the Baltic. Living there on sandy shores which they had not the skill to make fruitful, they built strong ships, in which they boldly sailed to other countries in search of wealth to be won.

They cared little that their native land lacked fruitful soil while the sea lay open before them, the wide highway leading to richer lands which they could plunder or even take for their own.



Men of the Tribes on the Western Shores of the Baltic  
from which the Jutes came

They were a tall, blue-eyed, fair-haired people, so fierce and cruel that the Romans called them “the wolves of the sea”. They had

many times longed to seize upon Britain and live there.

When, therefore, these two leaders, Hengist and Horsa, received the invitation from Vortigern, they were most willing to come over.

The Jutes landed on a small island, Thanet, near the mouth of the Thames, at a town called Ebbsfleet, which is now, however, at some distance inland.

They made short work of the Piets, driving them back to their fastnesses in the mountains of the north; and the Britons once more possessed their land in peace.

The Jutes now sent across the sea to their native land, and invited their friends to join them. Hengist resolved to make himself stronger by marrying his daughter, Rowena, to the British king. So he sent for her also to come to Britain. When she had arrived, he made a great feast for the king, inviting to it many guests.

In the midst of the feast, the beautiful Rowena filled a cup of wine and handed it to their master, saying: "Health to you, dear King".

Vortigern was struck by her beauty, and soon after married her. By doing this, he thought he had made the chief of the pirates

his friend. He soon found, however, that Hengist and Horsa meant to have the country for themselves and their people.

A quarrel about their pay for fighting the Picts was made the excuse for marching



through Kent to London. Horsa was killed in battle with the Britons, but Hengist marched on, and took a large part of the coast, where he and his people stayed and made it their own.

A few years afterwards, more of Hengist's men came from Jutland. They were followed by a great number of Saxons and other peoples.



The struggle for the country went on for two hundred years, during which the Saxons grew stronger and stronger, while the Britons became weaker and weaker. For the Britons had so long been protected by the Romans, that they were ill-fitted to fight against these hardy invaders.

The coming of these Saxons, though now dim and distant, is one of the greatest events in the history of Great Britain. They were drawn to these shores by the lust of plunder. But they were also being pushed on by the Huns and other peoples that were then swarming over Europe.

---

### “ The Wolves of the Sea ”

From the beginning of history the sea has kept guard over Britain. But it now seemed as if she had turned traitor. For the narrow seas that gird the coasts of Britain were the chosen highway of the new conquerors. The sea was their helper.

With the Saxons came tribes of Jutes from Jutland in Denmark, and still greater numbers of Angles from the seacoast of Germany. These



Saxon Ships

Angles landed in such hosts that, when they joined the Jutes and Saxons, the Britons could not stand before them. (See map, p. 209.)

The rich Britons fled across the sea to Gaul and Rome, and the poor hid themselves in the hills and forests till they were either starved or found and killed. Great numbers sought refuge in the wild country of the west, and their descendants live in Wales and Cornwall to this day.

The great struggle went on for many years, till the whole of the land was in the hands of these fierce people. The strongest of the tribes was that of the Angles, and there were so many more of them than of the others, that the

country was now named after them, and was called Angleland or England.

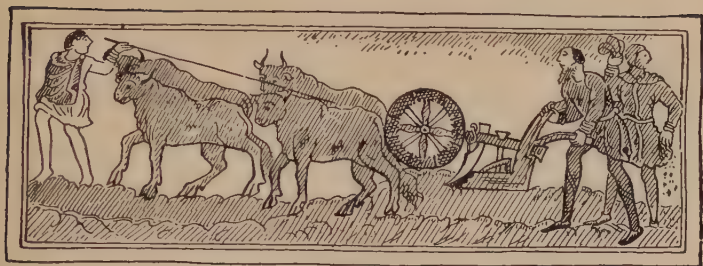
These Angle-Saxons, or Anglo-Saxons, were heathen. One of their gods they called Woden, or Odin, the god of war. Besides these they had Tiw, the god of warriors; Thor, the god of thunder; Freya, the goddess of spring; and Saeter, the god of farming and gardening. From these they named the days of the week — Tiw's-day, Woden's-day, Thor's-day, Freya's-day, and Sater-day.



Statue of Thor, the God of  
Thunder

They were a handsome people, tall and strong, with blue eyes and long, flowing hair. Their warriors wore shields hung to their necks by chains, and many of them fought with iron sledge-hammers.

Though wild and fierce, these “sea wolves” had some good customs. They were kind and gentle with their own children and



Ploughing (from an old Saxon calendar)

with women. When they settled in this country and had houses and land they loved their homes, and would have died to defend them.

They were cheerful, and liked music, and at their feasts they had harpers and singers. But they had not been taught to read, and there were no books among them.

They made it a boast that they were free; indeed, the men of different villages kept so much apart that they were like enemies.

The greater part of the men were called *churls*, and were freemen, each holding his own portion of land. The chief men, who had earned fame for themselves, or whose fathers had been noble, were called *eorls*. From these *eorls* were chosen leaders in war and rulers in peace, and these leaders were known as aldermen. But

---

NOTE—The English word “*earl*” comes from a Danish word, “*jarl*,” not from the old English word “*eorl*” referred to here.

no man enjoyed more rights than any of his fellows.

Disputes between the villagers were settled at the “ tun-moot ”, that is, a town meeting at which all the men would attend to give their votes. Matters of more importance were decided at the “ shire-moot ”, or county meeting. Here, again, every freeman had the right to attend.

Laws were made, and the great questions of peace and war were talked about by the “ Witan ”, or wise men of the people, that is, the aldermen and other great men. The people also came to these meetings, and showed by their shouts what they thought of their wise men’s speeches.

The people had at first not one king, but many. There were at one time at least seven great kingdoms in England, though at last one of the kings, Egbert of Wessex, was looked upon as chief or master king by the rest.







AN ANGLO-SAXON FEAST

From an original painting by Frank Gillett, R.I.

## How the Saxons Lived

The poorer Saxons lived in huts of clay and thatch, and ate rye bread, pork, and such fish or game as they could catch for themselves. The Saxon chiefs lived in large wooden houses, thatched with reeds.

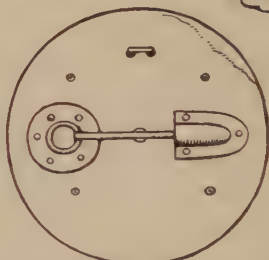
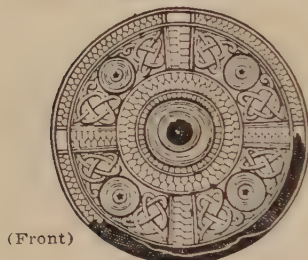


Coin of Egbert (from the original in the British Museum)

Each house had a great dining-hall, where the feasts were held, and a number of smaller rooms all round. The noble guests, and the master and mistress of the house, slept in the small rooms. The floor of the dining-hall was strewn with rushes.

At the Saxon feasts there was plenty of rye or barley bread, pork, fish, and game, and also of ale and mead, a drink made from honey. Wine, beef, mutton, and bread made from wheat flour were kept for the upper table, where the nobles sat.

After dinner a harp was handed around that each man might play and sing. Then, after a time, the ladies and serving men left the hall. The common people and fighting men would remain at the tables till some of them fell asleep



The ornament on the circular brooch is formed by means of plates of thin gold, and gold wire laid on, with bosses of ivory and red glass.

#### Saxon Brooches

on the ground, among the rushes, with the dogs for company.

The greater part of the history of that time was to be found in the stories and songs of the minstrels. Some of these minstrels were poets, and could make songs and stories as well as they could sing or tell them.

Besides the minstrels there were gleemen, who sang songs or glees, and performed tricks, such as keeping three balls and three daggers in the air by tossing them quickly from hand to hand.

The Saxon ladies amused themselves with

of gold, took the King and laid him in the midst, with his head resting on a pillow.

“ Ah, dear brother! ” said one of them, “ why have you tarried so long from me? Alas! this wound on your head has taken cold.”

Then they rowed gently from the land, and left the knight standing on the shore.

“ Ah, my Lord Arthur! ” he called out, “ what shall become of me, now that you have gone from me, and left me alone among my enemies? ”

“ Comfort yourself,” said the King. “ I cannot help you, much as I would like to, for I am going to the vale of Avilion to heal myself of my grievous wound. If you should never hear of me more, do not forget King Arthur.”

As the barge moved slowly out of sight, the knight stood watching it. Then he ran weeping into the forest.

### Angels, not Angles

The Christian religion, as we have seen, had long been taught in Rome. But in the British Isles Christians were found only among the Britons, or Welsh, who had been driven to the west, and among the people of Ireland and the lowlands of Scotland. The Jutes, Saxons, and Angles were still heathen.

One day a young Roman priest named Gregory was passing through the market-place of Rome. Among the slaves who were huddled there, waiting to be bought, were some pretty boys, whose blue eyes, fair hair, and rosy faces were strange to the dark Roman.

They may have been the children of some captives, or some young boys who had been stolen from England.

“Who are these?” he asked of one who was standing by.

“They are Angles,” was the answer; “Angles from England over the sea.”

“Not Angles, but angels,” he said, touching their fair, golden locks kindly. “And do they come from England?”

“Yes, from heathen Deira, the kingdom of King Ella there.”





THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

From the painting by John H. Bacon, A.R.A.





“Then shall they be saved from the wrath of God,” that is, *de ira*, for Gregory spoke in Latin, “and Alleluia shall be sung in the land of Ella.”

After asking some more questions, he made up his mind that he would go to the country from which those lads came, and have the people taught the religion of Christ.

It was many years before he could do as he wished; but when he became Pope Gregory the Great he remembered the boys in the market-place, and what he had said about them, and how he had longed to go and teach them. He wished to change the English from heathens to Christians, but he could not now go to England, as he had meant to do.

At the head of one of the convents in Rome was a monk named Augustine, and he was chosen by Gregory to go to England. With



Pope Gregory (from a print in the British Museum)

him Augustine took forty monks, and they landed at the Isle of Thanet in Kent.

The King of Kent at that time was Ethelbert, who had married a Christian princess named Bertha, a daughter of the King of Paris. Queen Bertha had caused a little church to be built at Canterbury, where she often went to pray. Her husband, therefore, must have heard something of her religion before the good Augustine came to teach him.



St. Augustine's Gateway, Canterbury

When Augustine landed and sent word to the King that he had come to speak of Christ, Ethelbert sent a kindly welcome to him. With his wife, the King sat among his people in the open air, under a great tree, to receive the teachers.

The rough English must have

wondered greatly as the monks came slowly along, chanting solemn hymns, and bearing aloft a great silver cross and a banner painted with the figure of Jesus.

Ethelbert listened with attention to what Augustine had to say. "Fair are your words," he said, when the monks had finished, "but they are also new and strange. I may not forsake the gods of my fathers, but as for my people, they may believe whatsoever they will, and no man shall hinder them."

The King allowed Augustine to make his home in Canterbury, where he held services in Queen Bertha's church. There the monks lived a simple life, preaching to all who would listen to their words, caring nothing for riches, and trusting for their daily food to the kindness of those they taught.

In the course of time Ethelbert, his nobles, and his people were baptized. The heathen altars and temples were pulled down, and Augustine had churches built in many parts of the country.

### A Great Preacher

The kingdom in the north of England was called Northumbria, and it stretched from the Humber to the Tweed. Its king at this time was Edwin, who had married a daughter of Ethelbert.

Like her mother Bertha, this princess was a Christian; and Edwin, although a heathen, allowed her to bring with her some of the monks who had come across from Rome with Augustine.

One of these priests was Paulinus. The new queen and Paulinus tried hard to get Edwin to follow the example of Ethelbert, but he was unwilling to do so.

One day, as Edwin was in his palace, a messenger came to him from one of his foes, the King of Wessex, the country of the West Saxons. While kneeling before the King, the stranger suddenly drew a dagger from under his cloak and attacked him.

A friend who was standing near threw himself between the King and the messenger. He received the dagger in his own body and was killed on the spot.

It is said that Edwin made a vow that if he

should live to avenge himself on the King of Wessex, he would become a Christian. Not long after he won a great victory, but still he showed himself very unwilling to give up the gods of his fathers. He agreed, however, to lay the whole matter before his nobles.



Old English Gold Cross

At this meeting Edwin's chief priest was one of the first to speak. "It is our duty," he said, "to find out what these new things are. For, be they true or false, I know that the religion by which we have been living is worth little or nothing. Who is there amongst our people who has served the gods more faithfully than I have? But what have the gods done for me?"

"They should have raised me to great glory and honor, but others have been allowed to pass me in the race. If these new teachers can give us a good reason for the things they tell us of, let us accept the tidings at once."

Then an old nobleman took up the tale. "Our life," said he, "compared with the time



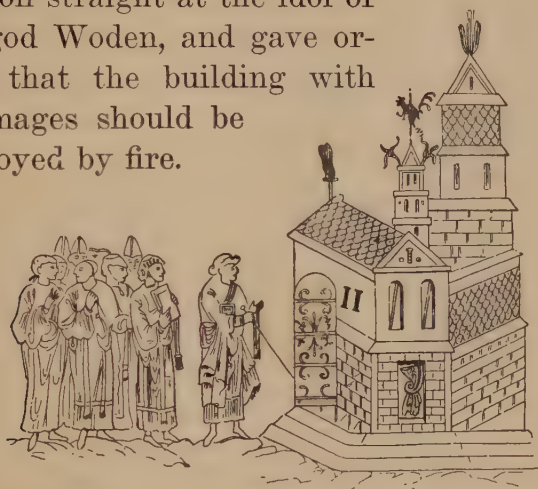
which went before it, and which shall come after it, seems to me like the flight of a sparrow through the hall in which we are now sitting, when the fire is blazing in the hearth, and the winter storm is raging without, and the night is pitch black.

“While the bird is in the room, he has light and heat; but as soon as he has flown into the outer air, he is lost in the darkness, and we see him no more.

“The life of a man is like that. We do not know where he comes from and whither he is going. If these new teachers can tell us these things, let us listen to them and follow their teaching.”

Paulinus, then, at the King's request, explained to them the new religion more fully. The chief priest, having heard him, said: “O King, of a truth he shows us a clear path, and places us in the way to life and happiness. My judgment is that we should set fire to our temples and pull down the altars, which have done us no good. The gods we have worshipped are false. Bring me, therefore, arms and a horse, for it is fitting that I, who have erred through ignorance, should show to the people that our worship of the gods has been folly.”

So saying, he left the hall, and, mounting the horse which had been brought, dashed off to the temple. When he reached it, he hurled his weapon straight at the idol of the god Woden, and gave orders that the building with its images should be destroyed by fire.



Consecration of a Saxon Church (from an ancient MS. of Cædmon's Poems)

When Edwin and his nobles saw that the chief priest took no harm from this daring deed, they were sure that the gods were helpless, and all hastened to be baptized and to become Christians.

So the land of Northumbria became Christian, and the new religion spread north and south. From Edinburgh in the north, which he built and named after himself, Edwin was

overlord of all the land save Kent in the south. And it is said that while he was king, a woman with her child in her arms might walk through the land from sea to sea and receive no harm. Traders began to pass to and fro along the roads, and for a while there was law and order in England.

---

### **The Story of Mohammed**

About the beginning of the seventh century, when England was fast becoming Christian, a new power arose in the world. It drew its strength from the religion preached by Mohammed to the Arabs, who lived in Arabia on the shores of the Red Sea.

The followers of this prophet spread his religion throughout the western part of Asia and the north of Africa, and in time even reached the nearest corner of Europe.

Mohammed was born at Mecca, in Arabia, after the middle of the sixth century, and belonged to one of the chief families of that city. Mecca was already a place where pilgrims went long before Mohammed was born there, but now every Moslem must turn towards Mecca

when he prays, and must visit it at least once in his life.

In the grounds of the great mosque at Mecca stands the holy Kaaba. Around this small temple every pilgrim walks seven times and kisses a sacred black stone, which is said to have been received by Abraham from Paradise.

The parents of Mohammed died when he was very young, and he was brought up by his uncle. He spent his youth tending flocks and wandering about as a camel driver or trader. Thus he may have visited Jerusalem and other places in Palestine connected with the life of Christ, where he no doubt learned something of the Christian and Jewish religions.

In the course of time he was sent to act as master of the camels for a wealthy widow of forty years, who traded in Syria. This woman soon became the wife of Mohammed. He was a handsome man, strong and broad shouldered, with a long beard and black piercing eyes.

Mohammed was about forty years of age when he began to preach his new religion. An old story tells us that as he was wandering about with his camels in the lonely desert he heard a voice from heaven, and on looking up



### PILGRIMS AT THE KAABA, MECCA

The religious center of the Mohammedan world to which all devout Mohammedans were commanded by the prophet to make pilgrimage



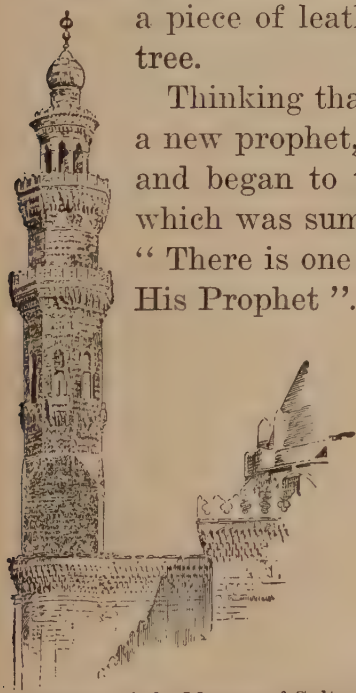
he saw an angel, who approached him, and assured him that he was the prophet of God.

Mohammed used to have dreams, and in his dreams he heard voices speaking to him. When he awoke he would get someone to write down what he had heard, upon anything that was lying near at hand — it might be a flat stone or a piece of leather, or a leaf of a palm tree.

Thinking that he had been chosen as a new prophet, Mohammed came forth and began to teach this new religion, which was summed up in these words, “There is one God, and Mohammed is His Prophet”.

He himself could neither read nor write, but he had his teachings written down in a book called the Koran, a word that means “book”. This book is to the Mohammedans to-day what the Bible is to the Christians.

On account of his



Minaret of the Mosque of Sultan Hassan, Cairo. Minarets take the place of church spires in Mohammedan towns. From them the “Call to Prayer” is made daily.



visions, Mohammed was greatly honored among the Arabs of Mecca. One of the first things the Prophet wished, after persuading his own family of his great mission, was to get his countrymen to give up the old religion that was carried on at the Kaaba, and to worship only one God.

He also tried to persuade them to unite as one nation. As is the case with many reformers, he had to face great dangers. But in the end followers flocked around him. His noble presence and kindly smile soon drew more and more people to his side. His followers increased rapidly.

The rulers of Mecca now made up their minds to put an end to the Prophet's ravings, as they called his visions and teachings. So Mohammed, to save his life, fled from Mecca to Medina, on an oasis farther north. This is called the "Hegira" or Flight, and took place in the year 622. His followers all over the world, called Mohammedans or Moslems, date their years from the Hegira, as Christians date theirs from the birth of Christ.

At Medina he resolved to spread his new religion by the power of the sword, and, collecting a large army about him, he went to and fro,



Pilgrims at Mt. Arafat, where Mohammed preached his last sermon

making war on all who would not join his standard. He attacked cities and caravans on the road, until at last, after some years, Mecca itself fell into his hands.

Mohammed believed that he was sent to teach a more perfect faith than the Jewish and Christian religions, and that he ought to force it upon the whole world.

He now sent letters to the kings of the earth, calling upon them to accept the new faith. The King of Persia replied that he would put the Prophet in chains whenever he could find time to lead an army against him. The Emperor of the Roman Empire made no reply to

his demand, but, we are told, sent him a small present.

Mohammed died about eleven years after the "Hegira" without naming a successor, and he left no son.

---

### The Moors in Spain

The "holy war" that Mohammed began spread far and fast under those who came after him. In the reign of the second Caliph, as the ruler of Arabia was called, an old writer tells us that the Arabs took 36,000 cities or castles, destroyed 4000 Christian churches and temples, and built 1400 mosques for the practice of the religion of Mohammed.

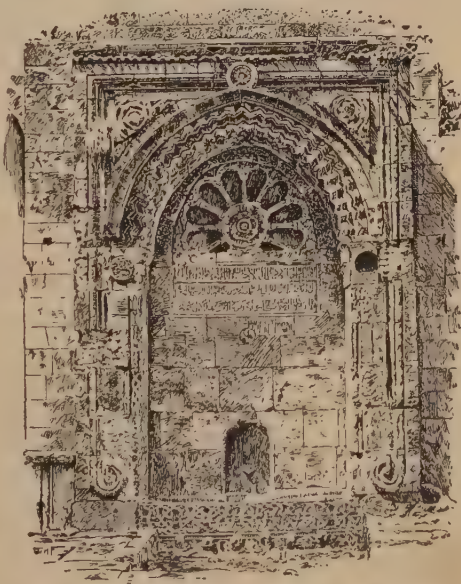
The desert, where these Arabs came from, had made them restless wanderers, for they had always to be seeking new pastures for their flocks. And now that they were fired by a new faith, they passed from land to land, caring not to settle, but only to fight.

We can hardly understand the force and fury with which the followers of Mohammed set forth to win the world to their faith by the sword. Not only had they no fear of death, but they were eager to be killed, if only they had

first slain an "unbeliever". For they firmly believed that by such deeds they would win happiness in the world to come.

It was this fierce spirit in the Saracens, as the Mohammedans were now called, that enabled them to conquer far and near, and caused them to be greatly dreaded by all the peoples they met.

Many Asian provinces, including the city of Jerusalem, fell into their hands. Farther east they won their way to the borders of India. They were kept out of Europe by the walls of Constantinople and by the use of "Greek fire," a burning mixture spurted upon their ships. But nearly all the time the emperors of the eastern part of the Roman Empire were kept



Mohammedan Architecture: a beautiful Arabian fountain in Jerusalem



Mohammedan  
Emblems

fighting the followers of the Prophet.

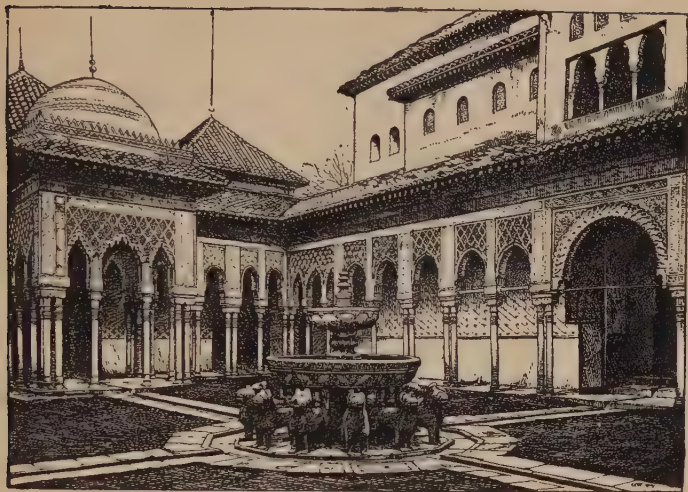
They marched westwards into Egypt, and thence along the northern coast of Africa from the Nile to the Atlantic Ocean, and across the Strait into Spain. The point where they landed, Gibraltar, still recalls by its name, Gebel-al-Tarik (the Rock of Tarik), the brave and skillful soldier who was the leader of these Saracens and Moors.

It was in the year 711 that the Saracens landed in Spain, and in the course of a few years they spread over nearly the whole of the Peninsula. Then they passed across the Pyrenees into the fruitful plains of France as far as Tours.

They would doubtless have spread over Northern Europe and across the Channel into England, had they not been stopped by Charles, the leader of the Franks. He met them at the great battle of Tours, and all through that autumn day he beat about him with his heavy battle-hammer.

The Franks, as they saw their leader wielding his hammer with such effect, thought of





Moorish Architecture in Spain: the Court of the Lions,  
Alhambra, Spain

Thor, the old god of their forefathers, and called him Charles Martel (Charles the Hammer). We are told that no fewer than three hundred and fifty thousand of the Mohammedans were crushed by Charles on the field of Tours, while no more than fifteen hundred Franks were slain.

By this defeat they were again driven southwards across the mountain barrier whence they had come. But it was nearly eight hundred years before the power of the Saracens came to an end in Spain itself. We shall see later what



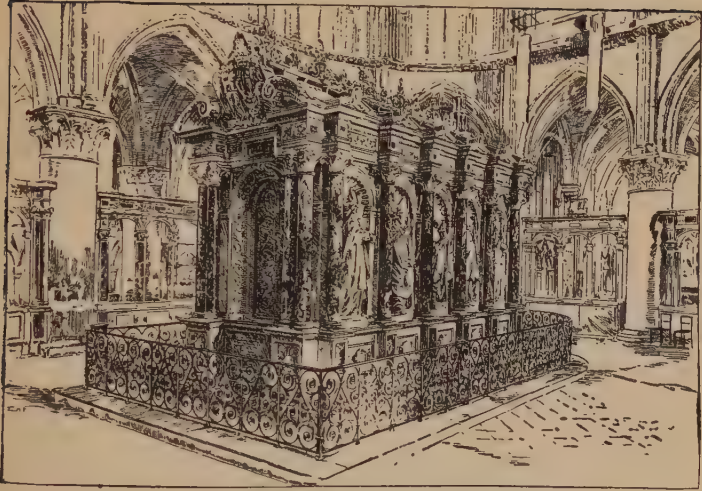
difficulties the great Charlemagne had in overcoming these dusky warriors whose crescent banner bore the motto: "God is great, and Mohammed is His Prophet".

### The Franks

Many of the tribes belonging to the same German family as the Angles and Saxons, who conquered Britain in the fifth century, began at the same time to press over the River Rhine into Gaul, and also into the valley of the Rhone.



All that remains of the gates of Rheims: the "Porte de Mars"



The Tomb of St. Remi (who baptized Clovis), at Rheims

Here they were able to get more and more of the fair fields of France into their own hands.

One of these tribes, dwelling on the east bank of the Rhine, called themselves the Franks, or Free Men. After a while their chief, Clovis, took possession of the whole country between the Somme and the Loire, and called it Francia.

He made his capital on an island in the River Seine, where already there had been a small settlement. That island is now the center of the beautiful city of Paris, and on it stands the fine Cathedral of Notre-Dame, its towers rising above the gay city.

When Clovis first took the field, he had to depend for the payment and support of his soldiers on what he could get in the countries he was fighting against.

After each victory the spoils were heaped together, and every warrior received his proper share, the king getting his share along with the soldiers.

A story serves to show the real power of the king in the time of Clovis. The church of Rheims had been plundered, and amid the plunder was a certain sacred vase. The priest begged Clovis to give it back to him.

When the time came to divide the booty, Clovis, wishing to please the priest and make the people friendly, asked that he might be given the vase, besides his own share of the spoils.

All were willing except one soldier, who struck the cup with his axe, declaring that Clovis should have no more than fell to his share by lot.

Clovis showed no anger at the soldier's deed. But more than a year after, when he was reviewing his forces, he approached the soldier and remarked that his arms were in bad order. Thereupon he cleft the soldier's skull with his



### CAEDMON CROSS AT WHITBY

The cross is a comparatively modern structure erected to commemorate the poet. Caedmon is shown in the lower panel on the front

battle-axe, saying: “ ’Twas thus you served the vase ”.

Clovis married Clotilda, the daughter of a prince of Burgundy. She was a Christian, and tried hard to persuade him to give up his old heathen religion, but at first he was most unwilling. At last in a great battle Clovis was hard pressed by the enemy, and vowed that if the God of Clotilda gave him the victory, he would become a Christian.

The enemy was routed, and on Christmas Day of the same year Clovis, with some three hundred of his stalwart, long-haired warriors, kept his vow. They gathered around the Bishop of Rheims, who baptized them, saying: “ Adore the Cross that you have burnt, and burn the idols that you formerly adored ”.

On account of the great zeal which he showed for the new religion, Clovis earned the title of the “ most Christian king ”, a title which passed from the old chiefs of the Franks to the kings of France.

The great aim of Clovis was to unite all the Franks, but it was left for a later ruler to do this. One of those who ruled after Clovis was Charles the Hammer, who drove the Saracens or Arabs from France. Not only, however, had



Charles Martel to resist the Arabs, but he had also to fight against the many pirates from the northern seas who now began to attack the coasts of France.

---

## EUROPE IN DARKNESS

The period from the reign of Clovis, who died in 511, to that of Charles Martel, who died in 741, was one of great confusion in Europe. Men have called it the "Dark Ages." The authority of the Roman Empire in the West had been destroyed by the invasion of barbarous tribes, and no new power that could keep order had yet arisen. Brutality, pillage, and murder went unchecked. The Latin language lost its pure form in the mouths of the rude northern peoples, thus creating new languages which became the modern French, Italian, and Spanish.

The Christian religion did not die out in this period, however. It was preserved among the people in the lands that formerly were ruled by the Roman Emperor, and was respected by many barbarian kings, who, like Clovis, became converts to the faith. The Church was the only refuge for persons who yearned for a quiet life



in those stormy times. Many princes and nobles even, both men and women, entered monasteries.

The custom of dwelling entirely alone in order to lead a holy life had started in eastern lands, but in western Europe it was more usual for groups of monks, bound by strict rules, to dwell in a house together. An Italian monk, St. Benedict, drew up the rule by which most of these groups lived. A monk could own no property, he must not marry nor have children, and must obey his superiors.

But though the Christian worship continued, it fell into nearly as great disorder and weakness as did the other affairs of men. Churches in one region had separated from those in another, in much the same way that the Christians of Ireland, Wales, and Scotland were cut off from other Christians by the pagan Angles and Saxons.

The result was that different forms of worship came to exist, and there was no common authority over all. Then, too, when heathen princes like Ethelbert, and Edwin, and Clovis, accepted Christianity for themselves and their peoples, they could not, in their rude ignorance, understand it very well, and many of the old

heathen ideas and customs mingled with the new worship.

The half-savage kings liked to have something to say about the selection of high priests in their kingdoms, and often allowed bad men to become bishops or abbots. Many poorly educated persons became priests, as there were few schools, and the light of learning burned very low.

Of the Germanic tribes that had overrun western Europe, the Franks proved the most powerful and came the nearest to rebuilding the fallen empire of Rome. Having established themselves in northern Gaul, they gradually overcame the Goths and Burgundians in the south, thus making their kingdom stretch over all of what we now call France. The Frankish kings continued to rule also over the old home of their tribe in Germany in the region along the Rhine River.

The successors of Clovis were not always able to keep this great dominion united. From time to time two kings ruled over it, one in the western part, called Neustria, and one in the eastern part, called Austrasia. In southern Gaul and Burgundy local kings occasionally resumed sway.

East of the Rhine, in the old German fatherland, were many tribes still largely unconverted to Christianity and but slightly, if at all, subject to the Frankish kings. Of these the largest were the Saxons, who had not by any means all moved over into England. They, and also the Frisians, lived on the North Sea coast around the mouth of the Rhine. South of these tribes dwelt the Hessians, Thuringians, Bavarians, and Alamanni.

The lands of these peoples were covered with forests where the wild beasts still roamed. The Romans had never gone far into this country, so it contained none of their fine cities or roads.

### Conversion of the Germans

Columban, a great missionary from the Celtic church of Ireland and Scotland, passed through the realm of the Franks preaching the gospel and planting mission stations to keep up the faith. In the hills of eastern Burgundy he built a monastery, which served as a sort of lighthouse amid the surrounding sea of barbarity and paganism. From there he went to the Alamanni, among whom he established a mission at Bregenz, on Lake Constance, in the modern Switzerland. Later he moved over into

Northern Italy, to the kingdom of the Lombards, where he died in the year 615.

Columban left many disciples who carried on his work in those regions and beyond. Gallus founded the famous monastery in Switzerland which is named for him "St. Gall." Eustatius and others worked farther east, among the Bavarians and Kilian went north into Thuringia. Thus the Celtic church did much to enlighten the peoples of central Europe, as well as those of the British Islands.

But Celtic Christianity, while splendid in its missionary zeal, lacked discipline and order. Its customs differed from those of Christians in other parts, and it failed to organize what it had won.

The most important among the missionaries who planted Christianity in Germany were two Englishmen, Willibrord and Boniface. Both of these men owed much to Celtic Christianity, for a part of their training had been received in Irish monasteries.

Willibrord was the foremost missionary to the Frisians. These people were ancestors of the modern Dutch in Holland, and were so closely related to the Anglo-Saxons that it was easy for the latter to minister to them. Willi-

brord with twelve companions arrived among them in 690, and, supported by the power of the Frankish king, who wanted to add Friesland to his dominion, gradually won the people to the Christian religion. In 696 the Pope made him archbishop to the Frisians. From his cathedral city of Utrecht he and his fellow priests traveled through the country, preaching and baptising. Once he was captured by pagans who would have killed him for baptising some of his converts with water from a sacred well, but the casting of lots was tried to decide the missionary's fate, and he was freed.

After Charles Martel had conquered all Friesland, the work under Willibrord went on more rapidly. For some time after his death in 739, however, heathenism existed, as the story of Boniface shows.

Boniface, whose real name was Winfrid, giving up the chance of high position at home in order to serve Christ abroad, came over from England to Friesland in 716 to work under Willibrord. He made a journey to Rome, where he did homage to the Pope, who appointed him missionary to the wild peoples of Germany, "if by any means the desert field of their hearts might receive the plough of the Gospel."

Full of zeal for his new work he visited the Lombards, Bavarians, and Thuringians, but could do little at first to move their hearts. He went back to Friesland, where he helped Willibrord for three years, gaining valuable experience.

In 722 he returned to Germany and courageously confronted the pagan worshippers. At a place called Geislar he found them gathered about a mighty oak tree making sacrifices to Thor. Boniface told them that their god was false, and ordered his assistants to lay their axes to the sacred oak. While the horrified throng looked on, expecting to see the wrath of the gods descend upon the bold intruder, a fierce gust of wind arose and hurled down the oak tree before the axmen had finished cutting its roots. By this sign the simple folk were convinced that Boniface was a messenger of the true God, and they forthwith accepted baptism into the Christian Church.

From this time the success of Boniface was so great, and his flock grew to be so large, that the Pope consecrated him bishop over all middle Germany, and later made him an archbishop with power to appoint bishops. Many Anglo-Saxon monks and nuns came over to help Boni-



face, and monasteries were founded as centers for Christian living and teaching.

Not only was the paganism of the Germans attacked, but the disorderly methods of the Celtic missionaries were corrected. Boniface was thoroughly devoted to the Pope at Rome, and to the Roman idea of unity of the Church throughout all lands. He created bishoprics in Hesse, Thuringia, Bavaria, and Alamannia, he had his bishops all confirmed by the Pope, and he required them to enforce the Roman order strictly.

He caused church councils to be held for the better ordering of the affairs of the Church. The first German council was held in the year 743. He also did much to improve the work of the Church among the western Franks, in Neustria, and to bring them into closer obedience to Rome. So energetically did he labor with the Franks that the Pope himself was afraid lest he would give offense to their principal men.

In the year 755 Boniface went again into Friesland, the scene of his earlier labors, and it was there while baptising and confirming converts that he was attacked and slain by a band of heathen Frisians. His comrades would have

defended him, but he forbade them to lift their hands against the people unto whom he had come to minister. To this day Boniface is remembered as one of the greatest missionaries the world has ever known.

---

### Caedmon, the Sweet Singer

It was some time before all the people in England became Christians, but, as we have seen, the Christian religion was at last taught over the whole country.

Edwin, who ruled over the northern part, had become Christian. He was kind to Christian teachers, and after his death a grand-niece of his, named Hilda, founded a home for monks and nuns at Whitby in Yorkshire. It stood on a high cliff, the broad sea below it on one side, and the wooded valley of the Esk on the other.

Here men and women lived pure and peaceful lives. They read and studied, they shared all their goods in common, and they called Hilda, "Mother", and looked up to her as one far higher and holier than themselves.

In these days there were no printed books. The few books of prayers, the copies of the

Bible, the songs and stories, and the history of what had been done in olden days, all had to be written with pen and ink by the monks and teachers.

The abbess Hilda was a kind, good woman, and taught and cared for the poor, ignorant people who dwelt around about, and they learned from her the stories of the Bible in song and poem.

The servants and laborers of Whitby Abbey and the farm attached to it used to meet in the large dining-room of an evening, and pass the time in singing. They would sing of the brave deeds of old to the music of the harp, for there were many who could play the small Saxon harp.

Among them was one whose name was Caedmon, who had not been taught to read, and who could not play or sing as the others did. He was a shy, poor man, and his work was to mind the cattle, the horses, and oxen that were in the stables, so that no one took much notice of him.

When, as he sat with the rest, his turn came to sing, and he saw the harp coming towards him, he used to rise from the table in shame and go out sad and lonely. He was sorrowful



Ruins of Whitby Abbey

when he thought how well the others could sing the old songs.

One night he had gone out from the hall to the stables, and had laid himself down to sleep in the shed, where it was his turn to watch the cattle.

In his sleep he dreamed that someone stood

by him and called him by name. "Caedmon," he said, "sing me something."

"I cannot sing," the poor man replied; "indeed, I have come out hither from the supper because I could not sing."

"Do not be sad; you will yet sing to me," said the stranger.

"Of what shall I sing?" asked Caedmon.

"Sing of the beginning of all things," was the reply; "sing of the Creation of the world."

And the cowherd, to his own great surprise, began to sing the story of the Creation, which he had often heard from the priests.

When Caedmon awoke, he found himself alone in the dark stable with the cattle; but though the dream had faded, he remembered the words of his song.

In the morning he sang it to others, and told them what had happened in the night. He was taken to the Lady Hilda, who was greatly surprised at what had taken place.

After that, the abbess used to read to him every day a part of the Holy Scriptures. Caedmon thought over it all day, and then made a poem or a song of it, which he recited or sang to his friends.

Hilda now took Caedmon into the abbey, and taught him and made him a monk. He learned to read the Latin Bible for himself, and turned many parts of it into English verse. He told the story of the Bible in his own words, and was one of the first, if not the first, to write that story in our language. Caedmon was the father of English poetry.

All the people grew to admire and love him; but he was still a quiet, humble, and holy man. He lived at Whitby to a great age, and died at last peacefully in his sleep.

---

### The Venerable Bede

All England had become Christian some years before Bede was born. In his time the kingdom of Northumbria was the most peaceful part of the land, and its kings cared much for both religion and learning.

Bede is famous not as a missionary or statesman, but because, living quietly all his life in the monastery of Jarrow, he was known as the most learned man of his time. There was hardly anything he could not teach better than any other man living in those days.



But of the books which he wrote two are most famous. One is the history of England, which tells us all that we know of the early Saxon times, and the other is his translation, in the year 735 A. D., of St. John's Gospel into the English tongue.

The life of Bede was a beautiful one, spent far from the din of the battlefield, the noise of the marketplace, and the pleasures of the court.

All his days were passed in the peaceful

monasteries at Wearmouth and at Jarrow.

There he studied, wrote, and taught the 600 youths who gathered around him. For them he wrote a number of textbooks; for them and for the people he wrote a history of the English Church, telling how Christianity was brought into the country.

So earnest and noble-minded a scholar



Bede's Tomb, Galilee Chapel,  
Durham Cathedral

could not bear to think that the greatest book ever written should remain a sealed book to every person unable to read Latin. So he made up his mind to translate at least the Gospel of St. John into Anglo-Saxon, that all might hear it and understand it in their own tongue.

“My constant pleasure,” he says, “lay in learning or teaching or writing.”

Forty-four works, mostly in Latin, he had written during his busy life of teaching; one more — the Gospel of Love — he would leave behind him.

He was growing ill and feeble, and was urged to rest from the work that was killing him. But he would not leave even to the ablest pupil a work so important as the translation of the Gospel.

“I will not have my pupils read a lie,” he declared, “nor labor therein without profit after my death.”

Day by day Bede grew weaker, but still refusing to rest, he kept on cheerfully dictating to his scribe.

At last the dawn of his last day broke, and once again he called his scholars around him and bade them write. “Most dear master,” said the scribe, “there is still one chapter

wanting. Do you think it troublesome to be asked any more questions? ”

He answered: “ It is no trouble. Take your pen and make ready, and write fast.”

Amid the tears and farewells of those who sat around him, the day passed. It was now eventide, and the boy said: “ Dear master, there is yet one sentence not written.”

“ Write quickly,” said the dying scholar.

Soon after, the boy said: “ The sentence is now written.”

The aged master replied: “ It is well; you have said the truth. It is finished.”

With his head supported in his young scholar’s arms, he quietly passed away on May 26, 735.

---

### The Story of Charlemagne

The grandson of Charles the Hammer is best known to us by the French name of Charlemagne; but the Germans call him Charles the Great, for he was really a German king, though what is now France formed part of his dominions.

He was born at Aachen, near the Rhine, in the year 742. His father, Pepin, was not at

first King of the Franks. When Charlemagne was a boy he went with his father into Italy to fight against the Lombards, who were trying to make themselves masters of Rome.

The Pope had begged for help from Pepin, who crossed the Alps as champion of the Church. Having overcome the Lombards, Pepin gave over to the Pope the lands he had won in central Italy, known afterwards as the States of the Church. Charlemagne was present at the solemn ceremony in which his father was made king.

When he in turn became king in 768, Charles the Great set himself to defend and spread the Christian religion. In the year 772 he began his war with the heathen tribes of the north, from which our Anglo-Saxon forefathers had come. They were pagans, and he declared that the aim of the war was to make them Christians.

Several times he defeated them. Time and again these freedom-loving Saxons rose against Charlemagne, but every time they were overcome. Once, when Charlemagne had made peace with them, they rose in rebellion as soon as he was gone. He returned in great wrath, and gave orders that 4000 prisoners who re-

fused to become Christians should be beheaded.

On the other side of France he crossed the Pyrenees into Spain, and drove out the Saracens from the north side of that country. In the north-west of France he had much trouble with the Bretons, who were as little willing to submit to him as were their kinsmen the Welsh and Cornishmen to be ruled by the Saxon kings of England.

One day a strange guest arrived in the camp of Charlemagne. It was the Pope, who had come across the Alps to beg for help against his enemies. Like his father, Charlemagne gladly went to Italy and punished the enemies of the Pope.

So it happened that Charlemagne, the ruler of so many countries, kept Christmas Day in Rome in the year 800 A. D., and was present at the festival service in the Church of St. Peter. The Pope himself chanted the Mass, and the hearts of the people were stirred with the grand music and the solemn service.

At the close a great surprise was in store, it is said, even for Charlemagne himself. Leo suddenly rose, and, throwing round the king's shoulders a purple mantle, placed a precious crown on his head. The dome of the building







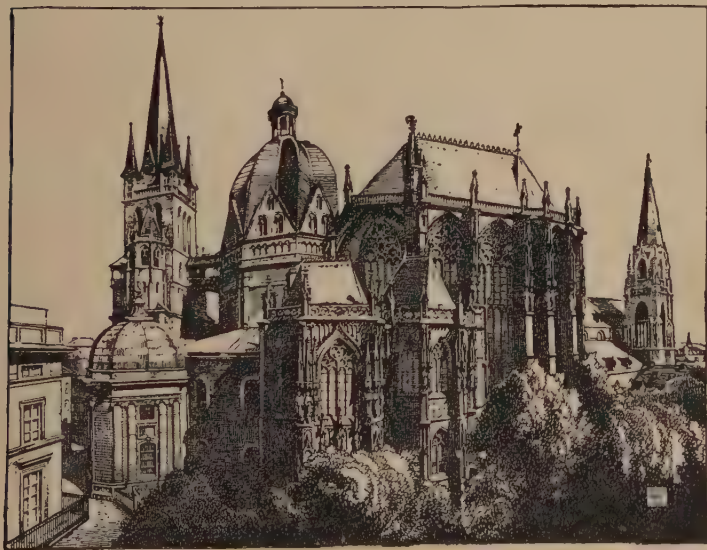
THE CORONATION OF CHARLEMAGNE BY POPE LEO III

From the mural painting by Henri Lévy in the Panthéon, Paris

at once rang with the shouts of the congregation: "Long life and victory to Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned of God, the great and pacific Emperor of the Romans!"

So once more there was an emperor in Rome. But how different from the Empire that Augustus ruled eight hundred years before!

Charlemagne's empire included — besides what is now France — Holland and Belgium, Switzerland, North Italy, and part of Spain, as well as much of that part of central Europe which we now call Germany. Charlemagne



Basilica of Aix-la-Chapelle, begun by Charlemagne

gave many estates in all these countries to the bishops and monasteries, where the clergy lived together, writing books and teaching schools. (See p. 186.)

He took special care to make good laws, and to lead his people to learn and study. A good monk, Alcuin, came over from England to help him in this work. He did much to improve trade, and by setting up fairs brought people together, and so helped them to know each other.

The founder of the English royal line, Egbert, stayed for some time at the court of Charlemagne. There he learned much that was to prove of great value to him in bringing the many small kingdoms of England under his leadership when the time came.

The court of Charlemagne was the most famous in the world at that time. Many of the bravest knights flocked to his palace, and kings sent their sons to be educated and trained there.

From far-off countries, presents were sent to the great king. The Caliph of Bagdad, so famous in the Arabian Nights, is said to have sent him a tent, a water clock, an elephant, and the keys of the Holy Sepulchre, in order to



### CHARLEMAGNE

From the statuary group in Paris

The two attendant figures give a good idea of the military dress and weapons of the period

win his friendship. Charlemagne is also said to have made a treaty with a King of Scotland who lived at the foot of Ben Nevis.

When not at war, Charlemagne busied himself in founding schools, churches, and monasteries in all parts of his realm, as well as in building castles and villages. On his visits to Italy he had been much struck by the music he heard in the churches, so he brought singers and musicians to his kingdom in the north to improve the church services of the rude Franks.

He is said to have written a book about farming, cattle breeding, fruit growing, fishing, and other matters of use to his people.

Charlemagne set his people the example of clearing forests, draining swamps, and turning wild lands into fields and pastures.

He had great plans, and among others he tried to join the Rhine and the Danube by a canal, some parts of which can be seen to this day.

The Emperor was tall, strong, and handsome, but had a short neck. He was simple in his ways, and a great hater of the drunkenness that was at that time so common among the German tribes. The sports he liked best were hunting and swimming. In his old age



nothing pleased the noble King more than to swim among his guards in the hot springs of Aix-la-Chapelle, which are still used for the cure of certain diseases.

Charlemagne died in January, 814, at Aachen, where he had built a splendid church. His remains were placed beneath a stately dome, not lying like those of common men, but seated on a throne, wearing a crown and clad in his emperor's robes, as if to remind the world that he had been a ruler.

---

### The Hardy Northmen

About the time of Charlemagne we begin to hear of a new race of sea rovers — the Northmen of northwestern Europe. Like the Angles and Saxons, they believed that the great Allfather, Odin or Woden, received all slain in battle to feast for ever in his great hall, Valhalla.

The shores of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark have very many deep fiords and other harbors, from which the sea rovers swarmed forth every year. Leaving their own poor countries, these vikings, or warriors, set their





A Norwegian Fjord

sails toward richer lands, where plunder was to be found. "Sea kings" is another name given to these pirates, for they cut out kingdoms for themselves in many lands.

Their vessels were no more than long open boats, holding perhaps a hundred men, in which it was a brave adventure to cross the North Sea; and many of these

warriors must have been drowned in these daring voyages.

Such boats had high prows, often adorned with a dragon's head; sometimes they were black as night, and floated at their masts the dreaded Raven banner.

These galleys were low in the water, rising to a lofty bow, which sometimes turned over like the neck of a swan, at other times ended



Remains of Viking Ship found in Norway (now in Christiania Museum)

in a sharp iron prow for running down the enemy's boats. Their square sails were painted with gay colors, and round the sides were hung the colored shields of their crew of warriors.

When a fleet of "dragon-ships" had found its way safely to some foreign coast, the crew would station themselves at the mouth of a river, or row up it as far as they could. Then they would land to rob, burn, and slaughter with the most reckless cruelty.

We may imagine what misery these fierce heathen worked upon peoples tamed by Christianity, who had fallen out of the habit of defending themselves. "From the fury of the Northmen, Good Lord, deliver us!" was the prayer that rose up from far and near, as

churches and farms were burnt, and people were killed or enslaved, while their goods were carried off to the ships of the vikings.

All the Northmen hated and despised the religion which had taken the place of the old one to which they fiercely clung. And, besides, they were out for plunder. So all over the land, flames went up from the monasteries and churches, where in those days the greatest stores of gold and silver were to be found.

Again and again the vikings sailed to the coasts of Britain and France, making their way up the Seine as far as Paris, destroying wherever they went, unless they could be bought off by princes unable to resist them. They sailed into the Mediterranean, too, and landed even on the coasts of Asia Minor.

Five hundred years before Columbus discovered America these brave Northmen sailed to Greenland and to what is now the east coast of the United States as far south as Cape Cod. Here they found the vine growing and they called the country Vinland. They



Viking Masked Helmet  
found in Denmark

made several voyages to this new country, but they did not follow up their discovery by planting colonies and making settlements, as was done later.

One colony which the vikings settled was Iceland, which still belongs to Denmark, and is peopled by the descendants of these old Northmen. In early days the men of Iceland were ahead of the rest of Europe in learning and in the writing of books.

---

## The Story of Alfred the Great

### Early Years

The greatest of the kings who ruled over England in early times was Alfred. He was the youngest and dearest son of King Ethelwolf, who also was in many ways a good ruler. This king had been brought up in a monastery, and all his life thought much of learning and religion. Alfred's mother died when he was four years old.



Coin of Alfred the Great

When Alfred was seven, Ethelwolf went on a visit to Rome, taking the boy with him. Along with the King went many of his chief men, and the people of the countries through which they passed wondered at the splendor and wealth of the English king.

When they came to Rome, Ethelwolf gave rich presents to the Pope. One was a golden crown, another was a sword the hilt of which was made of gold. Other presents were vessels of gold and silver, and dresses beautifully made and richly adorned. The King also gave away much money in Rome, and the people of Rome were loud in his praises.

They stayed in Rome a year, and then set out for home. On the way back through France, Ethelwolf married Judith, the young daughter of the French king, whose beauty he had admired when he saw her on his former journey. She was only seven years older than Alfred.

Judith was very kind to her young stepson. When they were back in England she read to him the stories and poems of which he grew so fond. The boy was bright and thoughtful, and he used to look with delight and longing at the books from which Judith read.

They were not printed, but were written by

hand. Monks spent long days in forming shapely letters, and in making the books beautiful with pictures and ornaments wonderful in form and splendid in color.

One day, when Judith had been reading to Alfred and his three elder brothers, she promised to give the book to the boy who should first learn to read.

“Will you, indeed, give this to one of us who can learn to read it?” Alfred asked of his stepmother. She again promised; and, as his three brothers seemed to care little for the book after they had once looked at the pictures, she placed it in Alfred’s hands.

Alfred at once took it to his teacher and asked him to read it to him, so that he might know what the poems were about. Then he set to work and learned to read them for himself.

In this way Alfred soon gained the prize. From that time he loved reading, and was never more happy than when he could talk to good and wise men and write down their sayings.

### **Alfred and the Danes**

After Ethelwolf’s death, three of his sons became king in turn. The third of these was





ALFRED THE GREAT

From the statue by Hamo Thornycroft, R. A., at Winchester,  
Alfred's Royal City

Ethelred, and it was in his reign that Alfred showed what he could do in war.

For many years England had been troubled, as Britain had been many years before, by the attacks of fierce warriors from over the sea. These were the Danes or Northmen. They settled in Kent and in the eastern counties, and from their settlements they used to attack and plunder the English.

The English kings tried to drive them out, and won many battles against them. But as fast as one band was beaten, another would land and come to its help. In Ethelred's time the Danes had won a great part of the country, and had made a strong camp where the town of Reading now is. It was near this camp that a great battle was fought, in which Alfred showed his bravery and skill.

The English army came in sight of the Danes at the close of a spring day. All things were got ready for the battle, and then the two armies went to their tents for the night.



Alfred's Jewel, found at Athelney, Somersetshire. Around the edge is the Saxon legend "Aelfred me heat Gewrean", i. e., "Alfred ordered me to be made"

Early in the morning Alfred, who had charge of one part of the English army, went out to set his men in order. But Ethelred stayed for a long time in his tent at prayer.

The Danes made the first attack, and Alfred was hard pressed on a little hill where he had placed his men. Long and fierce was the fight around a thorn tree that stood alone at the top of the hill. At last Ethelred came to help his brother. His men fought well and bravely, and the Danes were overpowered and put to flight.

Not long after this victory another battle was fought at Merton, in Surrey. This time the Danes were victors, and Ethelred was wounded in the battle. After lying ill for some months he died, and Alfred, who was now twenty-two years old, became king.

He was king not of all England, but of Wessex, the country of the West Saxons, which took in all the southern part of the country from the Bistol Channel to the border of Sussex. But the King of Wessex was looked up to as their head by the other kings.

Alfred was crowned king at Winchester, which was then the capital, and at once had to fight for his kingdom against the Danes.

A great battle was fought between the English and the Danes at Wilton. Neither side could claim the victory, but so many were killed that even the Danes were glad to make peace. Very soon, however, the peace was broken.

The Danes came suddenly upon the Castle of Wareham and the city of Exeter and captured them. Other Danes came across the sea to help their friends. For seven years the war went on, and still the Danes could not all be beaten back. They were in so many parts of the country that Alfred had to march from place to place to fight with them.

### **Alfred and the Cakes**

Alfred now built a fleet of ships to fight the Danes on the sea, and his ships were sometimes able to drive the enemy back. In spite of this, the Danes were so strong, and came into Wessex in such swarms, that the English lost all hope of ever getting rid of them.

Many Englishmen fled to France, and Alfred himself at last had to go into hiding at Athelney, a spot among the swamps of Somerset. Stories say that he lived for some time in the hut of a cowherd, where he spent his time in



Danish Weapons

making plans for freeing his country from the hated Danes.

One day he was sitting by the fire, thinking deeply and mending his bow. The cowherd's wife had put some cakes on the hearth to bake, and then she told the stranger to watch them, and to be sure to turn them when they were baked on one side. She then began to attend to other things. By and by there arose a smell of burning, and the woman came quickly to the hearth, and found that the cakes were burning black.

She took them up and turned angrily to the man who sat there, not knowing he was the King. "You, man," she cried, "you will not turn the cakes you see burning, but you will be very glad to eat them when they are done!"

The King bore her scolding with patience,





HOW THE DANES CAME UP THE CHANNEL A THOUSAND YEARS AGO





and afterwards took care to tend her cakes as she wished.

By and by some of Alfred's noblemen found out where the King was, and came to him. With their aid he turned the swampy place into a strong camp, and with them he talked over his plans.

One winter day, when food had run short, and Alfred's companions had gone out with their bows and arrows to hunt for more, a poor beggar came to the door. He asked the cow-herd's wife for bread, and there was only a small cake in the house.

Alfred looked up from the book he was reading, thought for a moment, and then bade the woman give half the cake to the beggar. He said that the same Power which once fed five thousand men with five loaves and two small fishes would also provide for him and his men.

Then he returned to his reading and, being weary, fell asleep. He dreamed that an angel appeared to him and told him that God was pleased with his kindness, and would soon bring him back to his kingdom, and give him greater power than before. In token of this, his companions would return that night from hunting with a plentiful supply of food.

Alfred awoke full of hope and courage. By and by his men returned laden with game and fish. He told them of his dream, and they were all full of joy at the thought that things were changing for the better.

They began at once to lay plans for carrying on the war. They made a bridge across the swamp, and built two towers to guard it. They also built a wall around the island, so that what had been only a hiding-place was now a strong camp.

### **Alfred and Guthrum**

An event now happened which raised Alfred's hopes still higher. The Danes, after fighting in Wales, came across the Bristol Channel and laid siege to the Castle of Kenwith, in Devonshire. The commander of the castle, one of Alfred's noblemen, planned a night attack upon the enemy, so as to take them by surprise.

One dark night he got his men together, and just before the dawn they rushed out of the castle and came upon the Danes sleeping in their tents. In the darkness the Danes were thrown into confusion and did not know their friends from their foes.

They were outmatched, and when they

learned that their leader had been killed and their banner taken, they fled in despair to their ships.

When Alfred heard of this victory, he made up his mind that now was the time to go out against the Danes. So he sent messengers into all parts of the country, asking for soldiers to come and join him.

The people were delighted to hear of their king again, for they had begun to think he must be dead. Soldiers from all parts flocked to his standard, and very soon he was at the head of a large army.

The main body of the Danes had made their camp on a hill at Edington, in Wiltshire. Alfred wished to know exactly how large their army was, and what was their position on the hill.

So he dressed himself like one of the strolling harpers, who used to follow an army from place to place, singing songs for the amusement of the soldiers, and in this disguise he went to the Danes.

Alfred's memory was stored with old songs, and he was a skillful player on the harp, so that he was well received by the Danish soldiers when he offered to sing to them. While they



Saxon Calendar

sat in groups, drinking their mead and listening to his music, Alfred carefully noticed how their camp was placed on the hill, and formed an idea of the numbers of the enemy.

His playing was so good that Guthrum, the Danish general, heard of it, and ordered the harper to be brought to his tent. Alfred was in great danger of being found out, but he was careful of his actions, and after playing for some time to Guthrum he left in safety. He had learned all that he wished to know, and returned to Athelney with a plan of attack in his mind.

He arranged that his men were to meet on the border of Selwood Forest. They came together as secretly as possible, but as they grew in numbers they became bold,



Tombstone of an Irish Scribe mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle

and the forest was soon filled with the clash of arms and the shouts of the soldiers.

The Danes heard the din, and Guthrum drew up his army in readiness for battle. Alfred's troops marched boldly to meet them. They began the fight at a distance with arrows, then at closer quarters they used their lances, and very soon it became a desperate fight with swords and axes, hand to hand and man to man.

Terrible was the slaughter, and for long no man could tell which side would win. At last the Danes gave way and began to retreat. Hundreds had been killed, many were taken prisoners, and those who escaped took refuge in a castle.

For fourteen days they were shut up there, not daring to come out and fight. Food and water grew less and less, and at last, fearing



that they would starve, Guthrum opened the gates to Alfred.

Then Alfred showed the nobleness and the wisdom of a great king. He saw that it was impossible to keep the Danes out of England, so he agreed to allow Guthrum to rule over the eastern part of the island if he would promise to leave Alfred's kingdom of Wessex and never return, and if he would become a Christian.

Guthrum was glad to agree to these very merciful terms. He came to see Alfred, and became his guest for some weeks, and was baptized as a Christian.

Then English and Danes joined together in feasts and rejoicings, and by and by when Guthrum went to his kingdom, he took with him many fine presents from Alfred. (See map in appendix.)

### **Alfred as King**

Great as King Alfred was in war, he was still greater in peace. No king before him, and few kings after him, did more for the real happiness and welfare of the people.

He drew up a book of laws. Men who did wrong were severely punished, but no man was put to death for his crime. Alfred took care

that the judges should be fair and upright men, for any who acted unjustly were heavily punished.

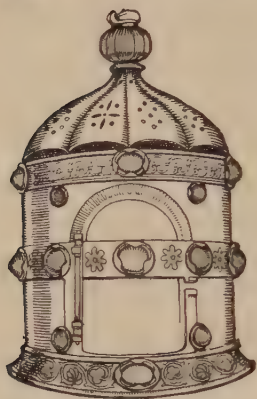
Respect for Alfred's law was so great that people said if apples grew beside the public highway a man would walk the country from end to end and not dare to steal them.

Alfred showed great favor to religious men and men of learning. He wished all his people to learn to read. He was himself anxious to know all he could, and invited a learned bishop named Asser to leave his home in Wales and come to live with him and be his teacher.

Asser taught Alfred many things, and among them the Latin language. When Alfred had learned Latin, he turned into English a History of the World and a History of the English Church, written in Latin by the Venerable Bede. To the first of these he added two stories of travel which were told him by the travelers themselves.

In his reign, too, there was begun the Saxon Chronicle. This was the story of England from Cæsar's invasion to Alfred's day. Monks wrote in it year by year the chief events in the history of the country.

After Alfred's death the Chronicle continued



Saxon Lantern

to be written for nearly three hundred years, and from it we get most of our knowledge of the early history of England.

Alfred is said to have invented a clever way of telling the time, for there were no clocks or watches then. He noticed how evenly the candles used in his palace burned down, and he found out, by careful trial, the size of a candle which would burn exactly three inches in an hour.

Then he ordered a large number of these candles to be made, each of them one foot long. They were marked off in inches, so that each inch of a candle lasted twenty minutes, and each candle lasted four hours. —

In those days the windows, even in castles and palaces, were often mere holes in the wall, for glass was not then used in England. Alfred knew that horn, when softened with hot water, could be cut into thin plates, through which light could easily pass.

So he set some thin strips of horn into the sides of a wooden box, and thus made a rough

lantern, in which his candle-clocks would burn steadily.

Now that he could exactly measure time, Alfred is said to have divided his day into three parts of eight hours each. One he gave to sleep and food and exercise, another to the business of the country, and the third to religion and study and the care of Church matters.

This great king is sometimes called the founder of the British navy, for he spent great pains in building ships which, as we have seen, were able to drive away the ships of the Danes.

Alfred's last years were disturbed by more troubles with the Danes. Under a fierce leader named Hasting, fresh bands of the Northmen poured into the country. For several years Alfred fought them on sea and land, and at last was able to drive them out.

Only four years afterwards the great king died. As he lay on his deathbed, he called to him his son Edward, a young man who had many of his father's fine qualities.

"Thou, my dear son," said the dying king, "set thee now beside me, and I will deliver to thee true counsel. I feel that my last hour is nigh. My strength is gone from me; my face

is wasted and wan. My days are almost come to an end, and it is time for us to part.

“ I go to another world, and thou art to be left alone to hold all that which I have held to this time. I pray thee, my dear child, to be a father to thy people. Be the children’s father and the widow’s friend.

“ Comfort the poor, protect and shelter the weak, and, with all thy might, right that which is wrong.”

So King Alfred passed away in the fifty-second year of his age. His body was buried in the Cathedral at Winchester, and his kingdom passed peacefully to his son.

---

### **The First Danish King**

For more than a hundred years after the death of Alfred the Great, the English kings had to fight hard against fresh bands of Danes. First, Alfred’s son Edward, then his grandson Athelstan, led their armies against the invaders, and showed themselves to be able warriors, as they were also good kings.

Athelstan won a splendid victory over a

large force of Danes and Scots, in which five Danish kings and seven earls were among the slain. All the northern country assigned to the Danes by Alfred's treaty with Guthrum was thus conquered by the kings of Wessex who now became kings of all England, and the whole of the English people at last were united under one government. But, in the course of time, there came to the throne kings who were neither so brave nor so wise as King Alfred and his sons. The most foolish of these was Ethelred, who became known as the King of Ill-counsel.

In his reign the Danes came in large numbers over the sea. They sailed up the Humber, slaying and robbing; they even came up the Thames and threatened London.

The foolish king paid them money to leave England, but they soon returned, and laid waste the country worse than before. Ethelred again gave them money, which he got by putting a tax upon the people. This tax was known as *Danegeld*, that is, Dane-money.



Coin of Athelstan (from the original in the British Museum)



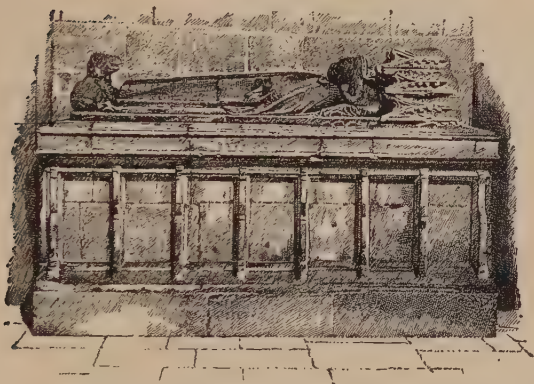
Then Ethelred thought he would destroy the Danes who were settled in this country. On St. Brice's Day his plan was carried out. The English slew all the Danes upon whom they could lay hands—men, women, and children. Among those who were killed was the sister of the Danish King, Sweyn, who, when he heard the news, swore to take England from Ethelred.

For several years the Danes kept up their attacks on England, destroying churches, burning towns and villages, and slaying without mercy. In the end they captured Oxford, Winchester, and London, and drove Ethelred in flight oversea to Normandy.

Sweyn, the King of Denmark, died only a few weeks after the flight of Ethelred, who then returned to his kingdom. The English King died two years later, and his son, Edmund Ironside, became king.

Edmund at once had to fight against Canute, the son of Sweyn. Five great battles were fought, in some of which Edmund was the victor. But at the battle of Ashdown, in Essex, the English were beaten by the Danes, and then the kingdom was divided between Edmund and Canute.

Only a few months afterwards Edmund died,



Athelstan's Tomb, Malmesbury Abbey

and then Canute became sole king of England. Canute was a little man, but as bold and fierce as a lion, and a most able warrior.

As a king he showed himself both wise and merciful. He kept the country at peace, and took care that justice was done, in this way earning the love of his people.

He paid great respect to the Church, and once went as a pilgrim to Rome. He gave splendid gifts to churches and religious houses, and was a good friend to the monks.

An old story tells us how he was going one day by boat to Ely to keep a church festival, and heard the sweet song of the monks as he

came near. Then he bade the rowers sing with him, and composed a little song for them to sing:

“ Merrily sang the monks in Ely.  
As Canute the King rowed by.  
Row, boatmen, near the land,  
And let us hear the monks sing.”

There is another story which shows the good sense Canute had. Some of his courtiers used to flatter him, and say that so great was he, that even the sea would obey him.

One day, when the King was by the seashore with his courtiers, the waves came rolling up the sand nearer and nearer to Canute's feet. He sternly bade them go back, and when they still came on, he turned to the lords, saying: “ One only is there who can say to the sea, thus far shalt thou come and no farther ”. And the lords bowed their heads in shame, knowing that the King meant by these words to rebuke them for their foolish flattery.



Coin of Canute (from the original in the British Museum)

When Canute died the nation grieved, for he had ruled wisely. After the death of Canute and

his two sons, the crown passed away from the Danes and went to Edward, son of Ethelred, a quiet, saintly man, who was called "The Confessor".

















